

Dan. Baker

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REVIVAL SERMONS.

Second Series.

BY THE

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WITH AN

APPENDIX.

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CONTENTS.

PUBLISHER'S ADVERTISEMENT.

THE Rev. Dr. DANIEL BAKER, of Texas, has been a devoted and experimental preacher of the Gospel for many years, and perhaps no minister has been more blessed in his labours during the present century. This volume embraces some of the most popular and effective sermons preached by him during his recent tour in the Southern and South-Western States; when, as the result of little more than three months labour, in which he cordially cooperated with the pastors of the churches that he visited, more than six hundred persons, as it is believed, were converted unto God, of whom more than two-thirds were males, and not a few professional men. Also a number of young men, many of whom have already commenced a course of study, with a view ultimately to preach the gospel.

The following Sermons have no necessary connexion with the first series, contained in another volume, published in the year 1846. Each volume is complete by itself, though the two are fit companions for each other.

The present series of Sermons, together with those embraced in the first series, are selected from some five hundred Sermons, which the author, during his long ministry, has prepared with great care. They can scarcely fail of being eminently profitable to the Church of Christ and to the souls of men. They address the understanding as well as the heart, and bring prominently to view those precious truths which the Spirit of God has been wont, in all ages, to make effectual to salvation.

PREFACE.

THIS volume of sermons is designed to be a continuation of a series of "REVIVAL SERMONS," published in one volume, a few years since; and which first volume has passed to a second edition. If it be asked why these discourses have been called *Revival Sermons*, the author would simply state, not only that they were designed to be of an *awakening* character, but were preached (in substance) in numerous revivals, and were blessed, to the hopeful conversion of many precious souls, of whom some fifty or more have become ministers of the gospel.

May He who was pleased to bless these disourses when they came from the PULPIT, bless them also now coming from the PRESS. And to his great name be all the praise.

REVIVAL SERMONS.

Second Series.

SERMON I.

PRECIOUS FAITH.

Simon Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have attained like precious faith with us through the righteousness of God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.—2 PETER i. 1.

THE faith here called *precious*, is saving faith, or the faith of God's elect, and very truly may this be termed "*precious* faith." It is remarkable, my brethren, what stress is laid upon faith in the sacred volume. It is wonderful how prominent a place it is made to occupy in the system of divine revelation. The word *faith*, and its kindred terms, to *believe* and *trust*, are scattered over the sacred page like stars in the firmament of heaven! How common, for example, are such expressions as these: Have faith in God—the just shall live by faith—we walk by faith—justified by faith—sanctified by faith—great faith

—common faith—precious faith. And how common are such phrases as these: Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ—Dost thou believe on the Son of God?—Dost thou now believe? With regard to the equivalent term, *trust*, how common, particularly in the Old Testament! All persons who are familiar with their Bibles, must also be familiar with such expressions as these: They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion.—O! house of Israel, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield.—O! house of Aaron, trust in the Lord. He is their help and their shield.—It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in men.—It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in princes. And again: He shall lift up a standard to the gentiles, and in him shall the gentiles trust.

And now, what is this faith, belief, or trust, so much spoken of, and upon which so much stress is laid in the sacred volume? Sad mistakes, fatal mistakes, have been made on the subject. Let us see to it, then, that we understand it clearly, that we understand it thoroughly.

Faith, in general, may be defined to be, credit given to the declaration or promise of another, on the authority of him who makes it; a full persuasion that what is affirmed is true, that what is promised will be performed.

When Moses said unto Pharaoh, "Behold, to-morrow, about this time, I will cause it to rain a very grievous hail. Send now, therefore, and gather thy cattle and all that thou hast in the field; for upon every man and beast which shall be found in the field, and shall not be brought home, the hail shall come down upon them, and they shall die." He that *believed* the word of the Lord, among the servants of Pharaoh, made his servants and his cattle flee into the houses, and he that *believed not*, left his servants and his cattle in the field.

Having said thus much touching the nature of faith in general, and its common operations, I wish now to call your attention to *faith in Christ*, the thing particularly referred to in our text; and which is so correctly and emphatically denominated precious faith. Take this view of the matter. There are certain declarations of the eternal God, touching man as a sinner in a lost and ruined state, such as these:—God hath concluded all under sin, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God:—Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that sinneth:—and, By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in his sight;—the amount of which is simply this: that the sinner is (in and of himself) in a lost

condition, ruined and undone; and cannot save himself, any more than he can roll a mountain, or heave an ocean. This we are to believe as true, strictly true.

And now for the corresponding promise. "Behold, I lay in Zion, for a foundation, a stone, a tried stone, a precious corner-stone, a sure foundation; and he that believeth in him shall not be ashamed." (Compare Isaiah xxviii. 16; Rom. ix. 33, x. 11, and 2 Pet. ii. 6, 9; Matt. xi. 28.) And again, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." The idea is this: that those who, thoroughly convinced of their lost and ruined condition as sinners, shall come to Christ, that is, shall receive him in the arms of an appropriating faith, shall be accepted, shall be pardoned, shall be saved. Hence the language of our Shorter Catechism: "Faith is a saving grace, whereby we receive and rest upon Jesus Christ alone for salvation, as he is freely offered to us in the gospel."

But that faith which is properly termed *precious* faith, must be distinguished from two things which are sometimes taken for it.

First. It must be distinguished from *presumption.* True faith is founded upon some divine promise; presumption has no such warrant. When the children of Israel passed through the opened channel of the Red Sea,

they had a promise of protection, hence the apostle says: "By faith they passed through the Red Sea as on dry land, which the Egyptians assaying to do, were drowned." The children of Israel had a promise, the Egyptians had not; and therefore, whilst in the one case it was an act of faith, in the other it was an act of presumption. Take another illustration. Gideon, with a band of only three hundred men, went against the Midianites, a great army. This, in ordinary circumstances, would have been most daring and presumptuous, but really was nothing more than a simple act of faith, for the Lord had expressly said unto him, "By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you, and deliver the Midianites into your hand."

On the other hand, when the children of Israel, relying upon their numbers, went up against the Amalekites, this was an act of presumption, for they had no promise of success. On the contrary, Joshua said: "Go not up, for the Lord is not among you." Yet they went, and what was the result? What may be expected in every case of presumption; they met with shame and defeat. "And the Amalekites came down and smote them, and discomfited them, even unto Hormah." Num. xiv. 45.

My brethren, if we have a divine promise, we may venture anything, even the salvation

of our souls; but we must beware how we venture upon anything without a divine warrant. Some persons, because they are not profane, nor intemperate, nor fraudulent; because they are as good as the majority of mankind, imagine that they have no cause of alarm in relation to their future state; but where is the promise that such shall be saved? There is none. On the contrary, there are many passages of this kind: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." "He that believeth not shall be damned;" and, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Beware how you cherish hopes not well founded! Beware how you presume even upon the mercy of God, without some clear and express divine warrant! And now, whilst we positively affirm that all who die impenitent will perish, and all who go down to the grave without a Saviour must be damned, we gladly and confidently say, that if the sinner truly repent, and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, he shall be forgiven, and saved! Yes, no matter how numerous and aggravated his sins may have been, even though they have been of a crimson colour, and a scarlet dye, if he will indeed break off his sins by repentance, and his iniquities by turning unto the Lord, he will, most assuredly, be pardoned and accepted, justified and saved. Why do we affirm

this? There is a divine warrant—there is an express promise, for thus it is written: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Isa. lv. 7.

Here you perceive is the promise of a God that cannot lie. Let the sinner then take God at his word. Let him repent and believe—let him fall in with Heaven's plan; and, as sure as the word of the Lord is true, his sins will all be blotted out, and remembered against him no more for ever!

Second. True or precious faith must be distinguished from that faith which is only speculative or historical; and, say not, that this is "making a distinction without a difference." The distinction is great. The one is confined to the head; the other has to do with the heart, also. As it is written, "*With the heart* man believeth unto righteousness."

And again, when the Eunuch said to Philip, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Philip said, "If thou believest *with all thine heart*, thou mayest." "A distinction without a difference!" Is not one called a *living*, and the other a *dead* faith? And is there no difference between a thing that is living, and a thing that is dead? Here

is a tree, having green foliage, bearing good fruit—and there is a tree without a single leaf, and whose branches are dry and dead. Is there no difference between the one and the other? Here is a man alive, his eyes are sparkling, his cheeks are flushed with health; and the springs of life and health are strong within. There is a man pale and cold in death, wrapped in the winding sheet, and prepared for the burying. His eyes are closed, they cannot see; his ears are heavy, they cannot hear; his tongue is dumb, it cannot speak, his heart is cold, it cannot feel. Is there no difference between this man living, and that man dead? The difference is immense. Even so is it with that faith which is saving, and that which is not. True faith, according to the apostle, works by love, purifies the heart, and overcomes the world. Observe, this faith is an active principle. It *works*—and mark! It works by *love.* It wakes up the affections of the heart—stirs up all the dormant feelings of the soul. But, true faith is not only an active principle; it is a *powerful* principle. It overcomes the world—overcomes all its smiles, and all its frowns—all its temptations, and all its allurements.

In the eleventh chapter of Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, we have a glowing account of the trials and the triumphs of faith. After

showing its mighty power in the case of Abel, and Enoch, and Noah, and Abraham, and Moses, and many other illustrious ones of ancient days, (of whom the world was not worthy)—the apostle breaks out in this language: "And, what shall I more say? For the time would fail to tell of Gideon, and of Barak, and of Samson, and of Jeptha, of David also, and Samuel, and of the prophets, who, through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword; out of weakness were made strong; waxed valiant in fight; turned to flight the armies of the aliens." And thus the apostle goes on speaking of faith as a powerful, triumphant, victorious principle, braving all dangers; meeting all difficulties; triumphant in every hour of trial; and if I mistake not, the apostle himself furnishes a striking example of the power of faith in his own case, when he exclaimed, "I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses, for Christ's sake, for when I am weak, then am I strong." And now, who can confound such a working, heart-stirring, soul-rousing principle as this, with a cold, speculative, heartless faith, which, wanting the principle of vitality, is for all practical purposes dead and of no value?

And here I may just make a passing remark. Some of those who are wont to confound a living with a dead faith, are wont also to confound a water-baptism with regeneration. How absurd! for if they are, indeed, one and the same thing, then when Paul said, "I *baptized* none of you but Crispus and Gaius; and I *baptized* also the household of Stephanus; besides, I know not that I *baptized* any other;" he might have said, I *regenerated* none of you but Crispus and Gaius. I *regenerated* also the household of Stephanus; besides, I know not that I *regenerated* any other. 1 Cor. i. 14—16. And again, when the Evangelist says, "But Jesus *baptized* not, but his disciples;" we may read it thus, But Jesus *regenerated* not, but his disciples. As "woes cluster," so error never comes alone. Do not err, my beloved brethren. Let it be remembered, then, that *that* faith which is true, or precious faith, is widely different, both from presumption, and from that faith which is cold and heartless. Presumption has no divine warrant; and what is called speculative or historical faith, may be possessed by the vilest of men, and even by devils; as it is written, "the devils also believe and tremble." True faith works by love; but devils cannot love.

Having thus made a proper distinction between that faith which is truly precious and

that which is not, I will now proceed to mention some reasons why the faith spoken of in our text may emphatically be termed *precious*.

I. *It adds greatly to our stock of knowledge.* It gives us information of a peculiarly important character; and information, too, which could be obtained in no other way. For faith soars where reason cannot soar; and faith teaches where reason is struck dumb! "By faith," says the apostle, "we *understand* that the worlds were framed by the word of God; so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Reason, in this case, could have given me no certain knowledge. Arguing from the axiom of some ancient philosophers, that "from nothing, nothing can come," I might conclude that the world existed from all eternity: or, with some others, adopting another theory, I might think that the world, as it now is, was simply the result of a fortuitous concourse of atoms. But, as each of these theories is environed with immense difficulties, without a divine revelation, I can have no certain knowledge upon the subject: but the Bible tells me distinctly that "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth;" not only so, but the Bible tells me the process of creation, or the manner and order in which the present system, or arrangement, came into existence. Believing the

word of God, knowing that this is true, I know all about the origin of things; and it is to me substantially the same as if I had, with the angels, been hovering over the scene, and had been an eyewitness of the whole. Having full faith in the word of God, I am just as certain of the fact stated, as if I had seen it with my own eyes. Is this strange? Is this irrational? By no means. I never was in London; I never saw Queen Victoria; and yet I know that there is such a city as London, and I also know that there is such a Queen. In the late war with Mexico I had no part; I did not see our gallant soldiers drawn up in battle array; I did not witness the conflict of battle, nor did I see them reposing in the arms of victory; and yet I know all about the matter. I know that they both fought and conquered; I could not have had any more certain knowledge of the fact if I had been actually present, and been a spectator of the scene. My belief in testimony gives me knowledge.

Just so, in relation to matters spread before me in the sacred volume. For example: By faith, I understand that there is only one living and true God; by faith, I understand that God made man upright, but he has sought out many inventions. By faith, I understand that God hath concluded all under sin, that

every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God. By faith, I understand that God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. By faith, I understand that after death comes the judgment, and that the hour cometh when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation. These, and many other things of like importance, are communicated to us in the sacred volume. By faith, they become matters of knowledge; and, this knowledge having reference to matters of infinite importance, and which could not have been made known by reason, or the eye of sense, O how precious is that faith which puts us in possession of this knowledge! Precious faith! But,

II. *It adds greatly to our store of wealth; it makes us rich: it causes us to inherit all things.* Yes, not only all things, really good for us in this world, but also in that which is to come. Faith says, and says truly, "the Lord God is a sun and a shield. The Lord will give grace and glory, and no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly." The believer may have neither sil-

ver nor gold; and yet, he is rich indeed! for he has that with which he would not part for all the treasures of the earth, or for all the world calls good or great. But, his chief possessions are on high, and in time of need he can draw largely from that source. So teaches the apostle. "Faith," says he, "is the substance of things hoped for." That is, it gives a present subsistence to heavenly things; it brings them near. Hence the poet, in speaking of this property of faith, says:

"The want of sight she well supplies,
She makes the pearly gates appear;
Far into distant worlds she pries,
And brings eternal glories near."

Aye, and this she does in such a way, that, as Bunyan describes it, the Christian is "in heaven before he arrives at it"—having sometimes, even on earth, heaven let down into his soul, or as another beautifully expresses it, "Heaven begun below, and glory in the bud." Believe me, brethren, this is no fancy affair. It is a blessed and sweet reality, as many can testify, by their own happy experience. The case of Edward Payson is in point, for during his last sickness writing to a relative he thus speaks: "Were I to use the figurative language of Bunyan, I might date this letter from the land of Beulah; for, the celestial city seems to

be now full in view. Its breezes fan me; its odours are wafted to me; its music falls upon my ear; its spirit is breathed into my heart. Nothing now separates me from that happy world but death, which seems only as an insignificant rill, which may be crossed at a step, whenever God shall give command." Yes, my brethren, when faith is strong, its visions are as clear as those of sight, and, in this way, oftentimes it enables the believer to rise above all the sorrows of this life, and anticipate the joys of the paradise of God. It is even so:

"The men of grace have found,
Glory begun below:
Celestial fruit, on earthly ground,
From faith and hope may grow."

Now, that faith by which the believer is enabled to pitch his tent in the land of Beulah, and, so to speak, "be in heaven before he arrives at it," is surely of great value, and may well be called precious faith. O! that it were more common. It would lighten the heaviest burden, soften the hardest bed, sweeten the bitterest cup, and brighten the darkest scene! O! give me this faith, this precious faith, and my song in the house of my pilgrimage will be the song of the Psalmist: Thou shalt guide me with thy counsels, and afterwards receive me to glory! O! give me this faith,

this precious faith, and my shout in a dying hour will be the shout of the conqueror, "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be unto God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ." Precious faith!

III. *It is the title-bond of our future inheritance.* The evidence or proof of our being the heirs of heaven.—This seems to be the precise idea of the apostle when, after affirming that faith is the "substance of things hoped for," he adds, "the evidence of things not seen." That is, it is the proof or demonstration of the fact. Take an illustration: This man receives an appointment to some high office under government. Here is the document. It is signed by the governor, and bears the great seal of the State. In all respects it is properly authenticated. Here is the evidence of the appointment—the full proof of the fact. The appointment is his, just as certainly his as if the governor were present and had inaugurated him into that office. But, take another case: You give me a deed to a tract of land in the state of Maine, where I have never been. It is duly signed, duly witnessed; every thing is according to law; that land is mine; I have never walked over that tract—I have never seen it. It matters not; that tract of land is as certainly mine as if I had bought it with my own

money, and had walked over it a thousand times. I have the deed, the evidence of the fact; that which entitles me to full possession. Just so, in the case before us. It is written, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Now this faith secures salvation to the true believer. It is the title-bond, or evidence of his being an heir of heaven. But, as the appointment or deed spoken of must be authenticated, that it may be known to be true and genuine, so must this faith be authenticated, or proved to be genuine. How? The apostle tells us, "To you that believe, Christ is precious." Is Christ then precious to your soul? This proves that you do believe; and truly believing, you have the word of God for it that you shall be saved. But, as an appointment or deed is authenticated in various ways, so we may mention another way to prove that our title-bond to heaven is good. It is written, "There is therefore, now, no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." Now observe our train of reasoning: If there be no condemnation, our sins are pardoned; if pardoned, of course we are the children of God, and heirs of heaven. But how am I to know that there is no condemnation for me? I have evidence that I am in Christ. But how am I to know that I am in Christ? The Bible tells me—"If any man be in Christ, he

is a new creature. Old things are passed away, all things are become new." Well, I am a new man. I have new views, new feelings, new desires, new joys, new sorrows. I have a new relish. What I once loved I now hate; what I once hated I now love. Yes, in all my views and feelings, in all my tastes and habits, I am a *new* man. My title-bond, so to speak, is now duly signed and sealed. Now, although I have never been in heaven, or seen its glories with my mortal eyes, unwavering faith in the word of God gives me an assurance, which fully satisfies my mind, and enables me, even now, to rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory. Precious faith!

IV. *Faith honours God and pleases him.* A very striking example, or proof, of this, is found in the case of Abraham. He staggered not at the promise, through unbelief, but was strong in faith, giving glory to God. How? The apostle tells us. "By faith, Abraham, when he was tried, offered up Isaac; and he that had received the promises offered up his only begotten son." The circumstances of the case are these: God had promised Abraham that he should have a numerous posterity, and that in Isaac his seed should be blessed. Now mark the trial and triumphs of Abraham's faith. "When Abraham was now old, and his wife also well stricken in age, God called unto

him, and said, Abraham, and he answered, Behold, here I am. And the Lord said unto him, Take now thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and get thee into the land of Moriah, and offer him there for a burnt-offering upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of."

O! what a command was this! Must Isaac, his son, his only and beloved son, must *he* be offered as a burnt-offering? and must this be done by Abraham himself? May not the offering be made by another hand? No, Abraham must do it himself—and do it without delay! "Take *now* thy son, thine only son, Isaac, whom thou lovest, and go into the land of Moriah, and offer him for a burnt-offering, upon one of the mountains that I will tell thee of." What a trial to parental feeling, and what a severe trial of his faith! Was not Isaac the child of promise, and if he were slain, how could the promise be fulfilled? Abraham could not tell, nor did he trouble himself about the matter. God had promised; that was enough. Is any thing too hard for God? Could he not do all things? Could he not even raise Isaac again from the dead? At any rate, Abraham was resolved to obey his Maker, and trust his word.

And what did Abraham? "He rose up early in the morning and saddled his ass, and took

two of his young men with him, and Isaac his son, and clave the wood for the burnt-offering, and went unto the place of which God had told him. Then on the third day Abraham lifted up his eyes, and saw the place afar off. And Abraham said unto the young men, Abide ye here with the ass, and I and the lad will go yonder and worship, and come again unto you. And Abraham took the wood of the burnt-offering, and laid it upon Isaac his son; and he took fire in his hand, and a knife; and they went both of them together. And Isaac spake unto his father, and said, My father: and he said, Here am I, my son. And he said, Behold the fire and the wood, but where is the lamb for a burnt-offering?" What a question from a darling boy! How it must have pierced the heart of the old patriarch! "And Abraham said, My son, God will provide himself a lamb for a burnt-offering. And they came to the place which God had told him of; and Abraham built an altar there, and laid the wood in order, and bound Isaac his son, and laid him on the altar upon the wood; and he took the knife to slay his son." What an act of triumphant faith was this! But this is enough. "And the angel of the Lord called unto him out of heaven, and said, Abraham! Abraham! and he said, Here am I. And he said, Lay not thine hand upon the lad, neither do thou

any thing unto him: for now I know that thou fearest God, seeing thou hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me. And the angel of the Lord called unto Abraham the second time, and said, By myself have I sworn, saith the Lord, for because thou hast done this thing, and hast not withheld thy son, thine only son, from me, therefore, in blessing I will bless thee; and in multiplying I will multiply thy seed as the stars of heaven, and as the sand upon the sea-shore; and thy seed shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because thou hast obeyed my voice." Thus Abraham honoured God, and pleased him. Yes, faith not only honours God, but pleases him. This idea must not be left out of view. What says the apostle concerning Enoch? "By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death, for before his translation he had this testimony that he pleased God; but without faith it is impossible to please him, for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." The case of Enoch, according to a Jewish tradition, was this: Enoch lived in a time of abounding iniquity. He was a bold reprover. His life was threatened; but God commanded him to denounce judgments upon the wicked around

him; assuring him that they should not be permitted to do him any harm. Accordingly he, in the midst of a raging multitude, lifted up his voice, and said: "Behold the Lord cometh with ten thousand of his saints, to execute judgment upon you all." Upon this they rushed upon him, to put him to death; but suddenly the heavens were opened, and in the view of all he was snatched away! "was translated that he should not see death."

Now that faith which thus honours and pleases God, must surely be of great value; must be precious indeed! O! that we had more of this precious faith in this our day! Let each Christian now lift up his heart, and say: Lord, I believe, help thou mine unbelief! Lord increase my faith! Precious faith! But again:

V. *Faith unites to Christ, in our effectual calling.* It binds the soul of the believer to Christ in bonds never to be broken. This is its chief excellence—this is its crowning glory; for what can the ivy do without the oak? and what can such poor sinners as we are do without a Saviour? But faith not only links the soul to Christ, but creates a union, mysterious and divine. Is Jesus Christ the vine? Believers are the branches. Is Jesus Christ the head? Believers are the members. Is Jesus Christ the bridegroom? Believers are the bride. Nay,

the apostle uses language, if possible, stronger still; for, says he, "We are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones!" Precious faith! uniting us to Christ, it makes us partakers of his righteousness; and possessed of this, our peace is made with God, and we are safe and happy for ever, for thus it is written: "There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." And again: "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ. By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God." Precious faith! How precious it must be in a day of trouble! O! how precious in a dying hour!

And now, in closing:—How very simple and beautiful is the way of salvation! We are not required to traverse oceans, nor scale mountains, nor study abstruse sciences. We are not required to go on a pilgrimage to the tomb of some prophet, or the shrine of some martyr. What says the Saviour? "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have eternal life." And again, the Saviour, knowing how prone many persons are to stumble at the simplicity of the way of salvation, comes over the same ground, in the very next verse; for, says

he, "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever *believeth* in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In accordance with this, when the trembling convicted jailor, at Philippi, propounded to Paul and Silas that important inquiry, "O sirs, what must I do to be saved?" the prompt reply was, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." Yes, *faith in Christ* is the grand requisite. This is heaven's plan, and let none stumble at its simplicity; for every thing that God does, is marked with simplicity. If you and I had the lighting up of the world, what a complicated machinery we would have! How many torches and lamps! and the world would not be well lighted up then. But God proposes to light up the world, and mark! one brilliant sun, like an urn of overflowing light, pours day, beauteous day upon the world. How much better than all our torches and lamps! Even so, all the efforts of all the men in the world cannot save one sinner from the damnation of hell! But, thank God! one loving Jesus, one dear, dying Christ, can save millions! Aye, can save millions crowding upon millions!—*Can* save, and *will* save, ALL who will cordially receive him as he is offered in the gospel! And now, if there be a burdened sinner present who desires salvation, let him

remember the words of the blessed Saviour, already recited, "As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life." This is a beam of light divine. This is the gospel in miniature! And, if the whole Bible were destroyed, and this fragment only left, we would have enough to point out our pathway to heaven. Remember, the language is the language of the Saviour himself, and his illustration is most striking and to the point. The children of Israel were bitten by fiery serpents; the venom was deadly. Moses could not heal them; the elders of Israel could not heal them, nor could they heal themselves. God alone could meet the case. And, accordingly, in the plenitude of his mercy, he directs Moses to prepare a brazen serpent, and lift it upon a pole, and pledged the veracity of a God that whosoever, when bitten, should look, should live. Here is a man bitten! O! send for Moses—send for the elders. They come. What is the matter? A serpent has bitten me, and I am in agony—I am dying! Moses, help me! I can't help you, says Moses. Elders of Israel, help a dying man! We can't help you. What is to be done? Must I die? O no, says Moses; yonder is God's remedy; only look, and you shall live. The

dying man, as the last resort, turns his dying eyes; they look upon the serpent, and instantly he springs up, and exclaims in the joy of his heart, I am cured! I am a sound man! Well, says Moses, this is just what God has said, Look, and you shall live. Even so, one look of faith at the blessed Redeemer, and the sinner is converted! One look of faith at the great atoning sacrifice, and his sins are all forgiven! Yea, one look of faith at the dear, dying Christ, and the universe is changed in relation to the sinner, and there are shoutings in heaven over him:—"The dead is alive, and the lost is found again." Yes, this is the way of salvation, as it is written, "Look unto ME, and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside me there is none else." And again, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved."

Travelling as a missionary once, I came to a house of entertainment. Although an utter stranger, I was, when known to be a minister, invited to hold family worship. I read in the third chapter of the Gospel of John, from the fourteenth to the nineteenth verse; and, in commenting upon the portion read, I remarked that the way of salvation was very simple. The case was simply this: The sinner is lost; he can no more save himself than he can roll a mountain, or heave an ocean.

He is not required to save himself. A Saviour, an all-sufficient and most precious Saviour, is provided; and, if the sinner will only cordially accept of him, as he is freely offered in the gospel, he shall be saved. A daughter of the man of the house, had, it seems, been under serious impressions for two long years; but, as yet, had obtained no hope. She listened to my remarks; she drank in every word, and was much wrought upon. During prayer she wept; and as she rose to her feet, at the conclusion of the prayer, she exclaimed, "I have found my Saviour! O my father, my mother," said she, "I have found my blessed Saviour!" "Well," said I, "Is Jesus Christ a precious Saviour?" "O!" replied she, "he is the blessedest Saviour that ever was." "Well, what would you take for your hope?" "I would not take the whole world," said she, "all in silver and gold." Awakened sinner! stumble not at the simplicity of the way of salvation. Remember, it is written, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." This is true—it is divinely true. O! be persuaded to fall in with this plan of salvation.—"Believe, and take the promised rest; obey, and be for ever blest." PRECIOUS FAITH!

SERMON II.

THE FULFILMENT OF SCRIPTURE PROPHECY.

For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.—2 PETER i. 21.

WHEN the apostle Peter wrote this, his second and last epistle, being aware that he must soon go the way of all the earth, he seems to have been particularly desirous that his Christian brethren should distinctly bear in mind one thing—that they had "not followed cunningly devised fables;" that the Saviour whom they received was indeed the predicted Messiah, and consequently the religion which he promulged was true—was divinely true. With regard to himself, if there were no other evidence of the fact, the transfiguration scene was of itself sufficiently convincing, for he was an eye-witness of his majesty, when there came such a voice from the excellent glory, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." "But," continues he, "we have more sure word of prophecy, whereunto ye do well to take heed, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts." The main idea here seems to be this: while the miraculous attestation given to the character of Christ on

the mount of transfiguration was abundantly sufficient to satisfy himself and others who were eye-witnesses on the occasion, it might not be convincing to such as had not been present, and therefore he refers them to what he denominates the more sure word of prophecy—more sure, because more capable of being more deliberately and severely tested. You perceive, my brethren, that the apostle lays great stress upon prophecy, as furnishing a powerful argument for the truth of the Christian religion; and I am free to say that I do think it furnishes an argument which can neither be gainsayed nor resisted; an argument which can bear the most thorough examination, and which will stand the "test of scrutiny, of talents, and of time."

I. In relation to Abraham, when he was aged, and yet childless, and Sarah his wife also well stricken in age, it was predicted that his seed should be exceedingly numerous. "If," said God, "a man can number the dust of the earth, then shall thy seed also be numbered." About four hundred years after this, the children of Israel (only a portion of his posterity) came out of Egypt, and encamped in the plains of Moab, an exceeding great multitude. Balak, king of Moab, alarmed for the safety of his dominions, sends for Balaam, the prophet of Aram—and mark what is said:

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"Behold there is a people come out of Egypt: behold they cover the face of the earth! Come now I pray thee and curse me this people, for they are too mighty for me." When Balaam came, having erected his altars and offered sacrifices, he took up his parable, and said:—[Mark his language!]—"Balak, king of Moab, hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse whom God hath not cursed? and how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? From the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him! Lo, this people shall dwell alone, and not be reckoned among the nations! Who can count the dust of Jacob, or the number of the fourth part of Israel?" Here you perceive that the thing which particularly struck the prophet of Aram was the exceeding great number of the people spread out before him.

But there is another prophecy in relation to Abraham, which is perhaps still more remarkable. It is this: *I will make thy name great in the earth.* Now, let it be remembered, that when this language was uttered Abraham was but a plain man, dwelling in tents. He was no statesman, no warrior; he was no poet, no orator. There was nothing about him which promised to twine around his brow the laurels

of fame; nothing whatever which seemed calculated to stamp his character with immortality. He was only, as we have said, a plain man, dwelling in tents; and yet it was predicted that his name should be great in the earth. And has not this prophecy been literally fulfilled? Is not his name great in the earth at the present time? Has it not been great for, lo! these many thousand years? Most of the nations of the East endeavour to trace up their genealogy to this wonderful man. With regard to the Jews, his lineal descendants, we all know how proud they are of him as their great progenitor; and even we gentile Christians, made the children of Abraham by faith, even we also have for him a most profound veneration. Tell me, my brethren, who and where is the man, and in what age did he ever live, whose name is to be compared with that of Abraham? We have heard of Nebuchadnezzar the Great, and Pompey the Great, and Alexander the Great, and Herod, and Frederick, and Napoleon the Great, but the name of Abraham is far greater than each—far greater than all! Is not this remarkable? Is it not strong proof of the inspiration of the sacred volume? Young man, your mother is right! The Bible is true. Beware how you slight it! It will cost you your soul!

II. In Genesis ix. 27, we have a very remark-

able prophecy, uttered by Noah: "God shall enlarge Japheth: he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." The first thing, in relation to this prophecy, which we would notice is this, that here, in three sentences, embracing only twenty words, Noah sketches the outline of the history of the whole human race, descending from his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth. Notice each prediction: "God shall enlarge Japheth." Dr. Scott says that Japheth seems to have been the progenitor of more than one-half of the human family! Besides occupying a large part of Asia, they spread over all Europe. They swarm in the West India Islands, and nearly cover all America, north and south. Thus, in exact accordance with the prophecy, God *has* enlarged Japheth. But it is also said, "He shall dwell in the tents of Shem." Now, whether this prophecy has relation to political or religious privileges, it has been most remarkably fulfilled. It is well known, that political power has, to a great extent, passed over from the children of Shem to the children of Japheth; and, in religious matters also, (the gospel, for example,) we see with our own eyes that Japheth has supplanted Shem. The Jews, for their unbelief, have been cut off, and we gentiles, and children of Japheth, have been brought in. The aborigines of this

country, beyond all doubt, are the children of Shem; and have not the children of Japheth, passing over from the Old World here, on this Western Continent, literally taken possession of the tents of Shem? Where your house now stands was once an Indian wigwam; and where our cities now rise in splendour, were seen, two centuries ago, the villages of the red men of the West. Yes, by treaty and by conquest, by fair means and foul means, the children of Japheth have lorded it over the children of Shem, and are at this very time dwelling in their tents. But the prophet adds, "And Canaan shall be his servant." And where, I would ask, do those in servitude chiefly come from, if not from Africa, the home of Ham, the father of Canaan? Ham, it seems, has never shaken a sceptre over Japheth. Shem has subdued Japheth, and Japheth has subdued Shem; but Ham has subdued neither. And thus we see that each item of Noah's prophecy has been most remarkably fulfilled. "God shall enlarge Japheth; he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." How is this to be accounted for? Peter tells us, "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

III. The next remarkable prophecy to which

I shall call your attention is found in Exodus xxxiv. 24: "Neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year." By reference to the context, it will be seen that Moses had given directions, that when the children of Israel had taken possession of the promised land, there should be a gathering together of the men, from all their coasts, to worship at one altar thrice in every year. Anticipating an objection which might very naturally be made, that this would hold out a temptation to lawless and predatory bands to take advantage of the occasion to rob and plunder, Moses, to set them at rest upon this point, utters the bold prophecy recited: "Neither shall any man desire thy land when thou shalt go up to appear before the Lord thy God, thrice in the year." Now, this prophecy was either fulfilled, or not fulfilled. If not, how shall we account for the fact—the well known fact—that year after year, and age after age, the males did go up to Jerusalem with their offerings, as directed. Suppose, for example, relying upon the protecting providence of God, promised by Moses, they had gone up, and upon their return, had found that this protecting providence had not been vouchsafed, think you that they would have gone up again? I suspect not. They would

have seen that an imposition of a very serious character had been practised upon them; and one imposition of this kind would have sufficed. They would have gone up and left their families and possessions defenceless no more. Now, the question is, how could Moses, how could any uninspired man, have foreseen that such a remarkable (may I not say miraculous) providence would be spreading its protecting shield over them year after year? This is truly a very remarkable case, and is worthy of the serious thought of every sceptic in the land. It furnishes an argument for the truth of the Bible, which I humbly conceive cannot be set aside. Yes, the Bible is true! Thank God, it comes to us with "credentials clear," "on every line marked with the seal of high divinity."

IV. In the ninth chapter of the book of Daniel, from the 24th verse to the close of that chapter, we have a rich cluster of prophecies in relation to the Messiah. We will point out only two or three, and those the fulfilment of which is remarkably clear and manifest. 1. It was predicted that he, the true Messiah, when he came, should cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease. Was not this a very strange prediction? Shall cause the sacrifice and oblation to cease! Were not these of divine appointment? Did they not form the very sum and substance

of the Jew's religion? How unlikely was the fulfilment of this prediction! And yet, has it not been literally fulfilled? Christ, by his death upon the cross, superseded the necessity of all the levitical sacrifices under the law. "It is finished," said he, as he bowed his head upon the cross, and the old dispensation then passed away. No acceptable sacrifice was offered after that: aye, and soon the very altar was demolished—and lo! the sacrificial fire has been quenched for these eighteen hundred years! It is well known that sacrifices and offerings were permitted to be made in Jerusalem only. This holy city, having passed over into the hands of the gentiles, the sacrifice and offering have literally ceased, even down to the present day, so that we can now see the fulfilment of this prophecy with our own eyes. But another prediction is this: "He shall seal up the vision and the prophecy." That is, shall close the sacred canon. Turn to the last chapter of the book of Revelation, and you will find these words: "If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book." And mark who the speaker is: "I, Jesus, have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches." Here you perceive the blessed Saviour, the true Messiah, (just as it was predicted so long time ago,) with authority, closes

the sacred canon. It is true—the papal council of Trent, in the sixteenth century, had the hardihood and daring wickedness to add the Apocrypha, (books which the Jews themselves never received as inspired,) and what was this? Evidence that the prophecy was not fulfilled by Christ, as the Messiah? Nay, verily, but proof positive that the papal Church, thus trampling upon the authority of of Christ, is, in deed and in truth, the antichristian power, which itself also was predicted. A third prediction in this connection is this: "The people of the prince that shall come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary." And who is this prince, in whose day the city and the sanctuary were destroyed? Titus, the Roman commander—was it done by his authority? No, he endeavoured to prevent it. He gave orders to his soldiers to spare the temple; but they were too strong for him. "When they had gotten within the walls of the city," Josephus states, "they were seized with a kind of frenzy, and, hurling firebrands upon that magnificent edifice, it was, with the city, soon laid in ruins." Note the accuracy of the prediction; not the *prince*, but the *people* of the prince, shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. With regard to the seventy weeks spoken of, it is thought to be one of the most remarkable prophecies upon sacred record, and

one of those most exactly fulfilled. Almost any commentator will show that the event corresponds to the prediction, to the very letter.

V. In the forty-fourth chapter of Isaiah, we find another Old Testament prophecy, referring to New Testament times. "I will pour water upon him that is thirsty, and floods upon the dry ground. I will pour my spirit upon thy seed; and my blessing upon thine offspring: and they shall spring up, as among the grass, and as willows by the water-courses." How descriptive is this of those revival scenes which have no signally characterized gospel times, beginning with the outpouring of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost. And, referring to the spreading of religion amongst the gentiles, the prophet adds, "One shall say I am the Lord's, and another shall call himself by the name of Jacob, and shall subscribe with his hand unto the Lord, and shall sirname himself by the name of Israel." And how descriptive is this also, of what many of us have seen with our own eyes, when in times of revival converts came forward, in crowds, and avouched Jehovah, the God of Israel, to be their covenant God and Father! But, what makes the matter yet more remarkable, is this, that the same prophet tells us that these converts shall be called by another name, and a new name. (See Isaiah lxii. 2, and lxv.

15.) And is not this also even so? Originally the people of God were called "Israelites;" now they are termed "Christians." And is not this another name? And is it not also a new name? Luke says the disciples were first called Christians at Antioch. Acts xi. 26. And now, my brethren, how can we account for these things? Believe me, Peter tells us the true way, and there is no other: "Prophecy came not in old time, by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Surely the Bible is true, is divinely true!

VI. In the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah we have a prophecy rarely adverted to, and yet one that is exceedingly remarkable. "Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever, because he hath obeyed the voice of his father." The statement of the case is in substance this:—In the days of Jehoiakim, the son of Josiah, king of Judah, the word of the Lord came unto Jeremiah, saying: Go unto the house of the Rechabites, and bring them into the house of the Lord, into one of the chambers of the priests, and give them wine to drink. And when they were brought in, Jeremiah set before them pots full of wine, and cups, and said unto them, Drink ye wine. But they said, We will drink no wine, for Jonadab the son of

Rechab, our father, commanded us, saying, Ye shall drink no wine, neither shall ye build houses, nor sow seed, nor plant vineyards, nor have any, but all your days ye shall dwell in tents; and we have done according to all that Jonadab our father commanded us. And Jeremiah said unto the house of the Rechabites: Thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Because ye have obeyed the commandment of Jonadab your father, and kept all his precepts, and done according to all that he commanded you, therefore, thus saith the Lord of hosts, the God of Israel, Jonadab the son of Rechab shall not want a man to stand before me for ever!—This is the prophecy; now let us trace its fulfilment. Some thirty years ago, Joseph Wolf, a missionary of the East, being in Mesopotamia, whilst conversing with the Jews, saw a man standing at a little distance holding a horse by the bridle. "There is one of the Rechabites," said the Jews. Immediately going up to him, the missionary inquired who he was. "I am Mousa," said he; and turning to the thirty-fifth chapter of Jeremiah, in a Bible which the missionary handed to him, he read in Arabic the whole chapter. "Here," said he, "is my lineage;" and added, "come with me, and I will show you that we number sixty thousand at the present day!" Saying this he mounted his steed, and, says

the missionary, flew with the swiftness of the wind, leaving behind him a standing monument of the fact that "Prophecy came not in old time by the will of man; but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." Well did Peter call it a "sure word of prophecy."

VII. With regard to the prophecies in relation to the Jews, there are none which have been more remarkably fulfilled, but they have been frequently presented; therefore, on the present occasion, I will pass over them very briefly. It was predicted that they should be a peculiar people—and have they not for ages and ages been a peculiar people, and are they not a peculiar people at the present time?—peculiar in their habits and manners; peculiar in their very looks? It was predicted that they should be scattered—and where is there a nation under heaven where some of this peculiar people are not found? It was predicted that they should be persecuted—only read the history of the Jews, and you will find abundant evidence that this prophecy has been fulfilled to the very letter! It was predicted that they should become a proverb and a by-word—and how common are such sayings as these: "As rich as a Jew;" and "Take care of that man, he will Jew you." It was predicted that they should dwell alone, and not be reckoned

amongst the nations—and is not this their condition at the present time? and has it not been such, for, lo! these many years? "The children of Israel shall abide many days," says the prophet, "without a king, without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without a teraphim. Afterwards shall the children of Israel return, and seek the Lord their God, and David their king, and shall fear the Lord and his goodness in the latter days." Hosea iii. 4, 5. For eighteen hundred years the children of Israel have had no king, no prince, no sacrifice, no image, no ephod, no teraphim, and they now seem evidently awaiting some great event about to take place in these latter days. I do say, that the past history of the Jews, and their present condition, furnish an evidence for the inspiration of the sacred Scriptures, which, I am bold to affirm, cannot be overturned or set aside. Young man! I repeat what I said before: your mother is right! The Bible is true! Beware how you make light of it! It will cost you your soul!

VIII. One prophecy more and I have done. It is found in Daniel xii. 4. "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." This prophecy is invested with peculiar interest, as, I verily believe, it has special reference to these last days, or the times in which we

live. By reference to the context, it will be seen that the prophet speaks of the rising of an antichristian power, which should continue twelve hundred and sixty years; and that about the time of its going down, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." There are two periods from which Protestants usually date the rising of this antichristian power; one is from the year 606, when Boniface III. became universal bishop; and the other is one hundred and fifty years later, in the year 756, when Stephen I., bishop of Rome, was made a temporal prince. Certainly, on each of these occasions, we see the "Man of Sin" looking out. Take the first. In the year 606 the bishop of Rome usurped the title of universal bishop. Was not this in direct opposition to the spirit and teachings of our blessed Saviour? It will be recollected that when, on a certain occasion, the apostles disputed among themselves which of them should be the greatest, the Saviour gave them a rebuke which they seem never to have forgotten to their dying day. And it is remarkable that even to the time of Gregory I., only a few years previous to Boniface III., this love of pre-eminence, or spirit of domination, was considered an unequivocal mark of antichrist; for, when the patriarch of Constantinople assumed the name and title of universal bishop, Grego-

ry I. made this remark, that "Whoever assumes the name or title of universal bishop, is antichrist, or the forerunner of antichrist." The bishop of Rome then being judge, the bishop of Rome, assuming, in the year 606, this very title, became antichristian in his character. Reckoning twelve hundred and sixty years from that period, (allowing three hundred and sixty days to the year,) will bring us to the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight, a year most memorable in the calendar of time, when the Pope of Rome was driven from his throne, and his tiara made to trail in the dust. Certainly there was then a blow given to that power, which, to say the least, marked a new and most disastrous era in the history of the Church of Rome. The other period from which we usually date the rising of this antichristian power, is, as we have said, one hundred and fifty years later, when Stephen I., bishop of Rome, became a temporal prince. And it must be confessed that then the features of the Man of Sin were much more clearly and distinctly marked. A temporal prince! A temporal prince! What warrant had he for this? What said the Saviour? "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight; but now is my kingdom not of this world." You see, my brethren, the oppo-

sition, the direct opposition of the Pope of Rome to Christ and his authority. How palpable! how daring! Look a little longer at the matter. The Pope wears a crown. Did Christ wear a crown? Ah! me, he did wear a crown, but it was a crown of thorns. The Pope wears a crown, set with jewels; Christ, a crown interwoven with thorns. Is the servant greater than his master? or he that is sent greater than he who sent him? But it is said the Pope is the successor of Peter, the prince of the apostles. Did Paul acknowledge him as prince, when he rebuked him at Antioch? Did James, when he presided himself at the council held in Jerusalem? Did the council, when they sent him upon an errand into gentile lands? or did Peter himself, when he used this unassuming language, "The elders which are among you I exhort, who am also an elder?" The fact is, if any of the apostles was prince, or primate, it must have been Paul, for it was he, and not Peter, who affirmed that "the care of all the churches was upon him." The case is clear; the Church of Rome is the antichristian power spoken of by Daniel, and by John also, which was to rule with a high hand, and continue twelve hundred and sixty years. But whether the rising of this anti christian power be dated from the year 606, or one hundred and fifty years after, it matters

not; the time of the end is near. As for myself, I deem both calculations correct. As there was more than one period from which we date the beginning of the Babylonish captivity, which was to last seventy years, and each was right, (seventy years carrying us to some corresponding decree for the restoration of the Jews,) even so, in this case, twelve hundred and sixty years from the *first* mentioned period, will carry us to the first effectual blow given to this antichristian power; twelve hundred and sixty from the second, will carry us to the last: for according to the Scriptures, this power is not to be crushed in a day; it will die hard, and its last convulsive agonies must needs be protracted. If, then, twelve hundred and sixty years from the first date bring us to the period when the great power of the Man of Sin shall be broken, twelve hundred and sixty years from the second date will bring us to the grand predicted consummation, when great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, "Babylon the great, is fallen, is fallen!" and amid Alleluias innumerable, her smoke shall go up for ever and ever! But, in any case, one thing is evident, Daniel's vision is closing; for it is to be known by this: In the time of the end "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." What a mighty moving amongst the nations has

there been in these latter ages! What a spirit of emigration! How they crowd in upon us from the old world! Every ship comes freighted with human beings. The tide of population flowing in upon us from all quarters of the earth, is immense—something like three hundred thousand every year. And how many, in our own land, are going east, west, north, and south, as business, or trade, or fancy may direct. I am bold to say, that at this present time there is more of this running to and fro, than was ever known before. Yes, literally "running." What is now the usual mode of travelling? Is it not in steamboats and railroad cars? And do we not speak of one "running" ten, twelve, and fourteen miles an hour? and the other "running" twenty, thirty, forty, and even fifty miles an hour? What multitudes are upon the move now, and with what speed do they go! Surely the prophet's mental ray was purged, and it was when he was under the inspiration of the Almighty, that he uttered this prediction—"Many shall run to and fro;" but this is not all; he adds, "knowledge shall be increased."

And is there not at this time a spirit of inquiry, and a spirit of inquiry such as was never known before? Is not the schoolmaster abroad, and the lecturer abroad, and the missionary abroad? It was said, "The Lord gave

the command, and great was the company that published it." And so, at the present time, the Lord has willed it that knowledge shall be increased; and how many, and varied in their characters, are those who are carrying the lights of science and religion into every land! Old landmarks are breaking down; old prejudices are passing away; and sacrifices are now being kindled in every valley, and on every mountain-top, not only throughout our boundless continent, but even in the islands which are afar off. This new order of things may be dated from the period of the Reformation. Then was the long slumber of ages broken; then was the morning-star seen to rise in splendour; and then could the great Reformers exclaim with the voice of joy and praise, "the night is far spent; the day is at hand!" Yea, congratulating each other, they might well indulge in the language of triumph and exultation, and say,

"Christian, see the orient morning
 Breaks along the darken'd sky!
Lo! the expected day is dawning,
 Glorious Day-Spring from on high.
Zion's Sun, salvation beaming,
 Gilding now the radiant hills,
Rise and shine, till, brighter beaming,
 All the world thy glory fills!"

What inventions, what discoveries, what improvements have marked these latter ages!

First, we may mention the mariner's compass, by which new oceans have been traversed, and new continents, and islands, and people, and plants have been discovered; and thus enlarging the bounds of human knowledge. And then comes the telescope, spreading out before the mind the immensity of the empire of God, such as was never dreamed of before. In former times it was supposed that there were no more than a thousand stars, (for this is about the number seen by the naked eye,) but now we are told that eighty millions have been brought within the range of human vision, by this powerful, this wonderful instrument, invented by the ingenuity of man. Next comes the microscope, which adds greatly to our knowledge, bringing to view a new universe. This language may seem strange, but it is literally true. Yes, bringing to view a new universe of minute existences, so exceedingly minute, that it requires no less than ten thousand of them to occupy the space of a grain of sand! And then comes the printing-press, that noble invention, which has served to cheapen knowledge, and diffuse it far and wide. Time was, when a Bible would cost five hundred dollars; now it can be purchased for less than fifty cents! Time was, when it was the work of years; now it can be done in less than an hour! The American Bible

Society alone strikes off twenty thousand copies of the sacred Scriptures in a single day! And the whole Testament can be printed in less than one minute! This invention of printing has marked a new epoch in the history of the world, and has served to spread light and increase knowledge far, very far beyond any thing that our progenitors ever dreamed of. What an immense number of new books are continually coming from the press! And, as for newspapers, periodicals, and tracts of every kind, they are now being scattered over the wide world like the leaves of autumn, when the trees of the forest are swept by the mighty winds of heaven. Even children now are supplied abundantly with reading matter, rich and varied. Even so late as when I was a child, the grand total of a library for those in tender years amounted to (so far as known to me) not more than some six or eight little books; now many Sabbath-schools have at least one thousand volumes each. One of the prophets, referring to the increasing of knowledge in the latter days, says, "a child shall die a hundred years old." Now we can understand what must have appeared very strange to those in former times: it is now literally true, that one dying in childhood, in this day of increasing light, may know more than many a one who died, in

former times, bowed down under the weight of a hundred years.

The steam-power, too—what miracles has that wrought! What a new impulse has it given to printing, travelling, manufactures, and improvements of every kind! Now we are in possession of the secret of performing by one hand what required a hundred in days gone by. Moreover, we have now the blind man's book. Did our fathers ever hear of such a thing as teaching the blind to read? Our Saviour enabled the blind to see by miraculously opening their eyes; but now, without a miracle, they are taught, not to see, but to read. And is not this the increasing of knowledge in a new quarter? And besides the blind man's book, have we not the diving bell, an invention of these latter ages, by which a man can go down into the deep, and bring up treasures long buried there. And have we not the submarine telescope, by which a seaman standing upon the deck of a vessel in the midst of the ocean, can look down into the blue water, and see distinctly the bottom of that vessel, even the head of every nail and every crack:—and the submarine battery, by which a man on shore, and hidden from view, can in a moment of time blow up a ship of war, and even a whole fleet, forty miles distant, by an unseen hand. You

have witnessed the wonders of the daguerreotype. Time was, when, if you wished your own likeness taken, or that of a friend, there must be at least three sittings: two hours the first day, two hours the second, and one the third. Now, one sitting may suffice, and that for less than one minute! Had a person predicted this thirty years ago, he would have been esteemed a visionary and a madman. Moreover, by the inventive power of man, our streets can now be lighted without oil, and our houses without candles. Did our fathers know how this could be done? Ice is now made a staple, and straw converted into paper. Who ever heard of such a thing fifty years ago? In medical science, and mental science, and geological science, how many new facts have been established, and how many wonderful discoveries have been made! But, not to enlarge, there is that "wonder of all wonders"—that great wonder of the age—the magnetic telegraph! Who ever heard of mortal man's annihilating time and space? And yet here is an invention which, to all intents and purposes, does it; for, in the conveyance of a message, there is no perceptible difference between one mile and ten thousand. A person in New York may converse with his friend in St. Louis with the same ease and in the same time that he could converse with his

friend, in writing, in the same room. Nay, matters can be so arranged, that a person in St. Louis, some twelve or fifteen hundred miles distant, may be reading the message of the President at half after eleven o'clock, that very message which is not to be read in Washington City until the clock there strikes twelve. This seems not only like annihilating space, but outstripping time itself. Only think: mortal man, so to speak, grasping the lightnings of heaven, which play around the throne of the eternal God, and converting them into swift messengers to go and come at his command, saying: "Haste, my servant, carry this message to my friend beyond broad rivers and towering mountains;—fly, swifter than the wind! In less than a moment, bear my message—in less than a moment, bring his answer back!" How astonishing is this! How it spreads knowledge; and how it proves its mighty increase! When I think upon the wonderful inventions, discoveries, developements, and improvements of these latter times, I am amazed. It would seem, that we are coming too near the throne of the Eternal; that we have actually intruded ourselves into his presence-chamber, and are within the precincts of the place where archangels dwell. Is not the inventive power of man, of the present age, like the pride of Nimrod, who, in the

loftiness of his aspirations, said, "Come, let us make a tower, whose top shall reach unto heaven." At any rate, I have thought that if the mind of man, now so luminous, should explode, it would be in a shower of sparks, astonishing the world with the brilliancy of its corruscations. The prophet, some twenty-five hundred years ago, referring, as we verily believe, to the very age in which we live, uttered the prophecy, "Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." How clear must have been the visions of him who could predict such things! Every thing was as if then passing directly and in full view before his eyes. Surely the most sceptical must now bow before the power of divine truth. Surely the most obstinate must admit that "prophecy came not in old time by the will of man, but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost."

And now, if these prophecies are true, must not all others recorded in the same sacred volume bear the same sacred character? Permit me simply to remind you of a few:—"Say ye to the righteous, it shall be well with them; wo to the wicked, it shall be ill with him." "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." "The hour cometh when all that are in their graves shall hear the voice of

the Son of God, and shall come forth; they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." Let then the righteous rejoice, for heaven, with all its joys, is just at hand! Let the sinner tremble, for hell, with all its sorrows, is not far off! Another moment, and the Christian may be in paradise with God and his angels! Another moment, and the Christless soul may be in tophet, with devils and damned spirits! Awake, one! awake, all! for eternity is nigh, even at the door, and the night cometh, when no man can work! Let no one trifle with matters of such high import! The Bible is true, and all its declarations may assuredly be depended upon. The argument for the inspiration of the sacred volume drawn from prophecy, is only one amongst many, but is of itself convincing; and the man who is an unbeliever, in view of the evidence drawn from this source, would not believe though one rose from the dead. Permit me, also, to guard you against infidelity. As this is a day of abounding iniquity; as intemperance, profane swearing, Sabbath-breaking, gambling, and other kindred vices, are, alas! too common in our midst, we may expect infidelity, at least in some of its forms, to keep pace with these things, for, as one well remarks, "Infidelity is a disease of the heart,

not of the head." Let the morals be corrupt, and the sentiments will soon become loose. Let the heart be infected with vice, and infidelity will forthwith spring up, like green scum upon the surface of a foul and stagnant pool. Beware of infidelity! It wars against reason and common sense, against God and the best interests of man. Beware of infidelity! It teaches that man is not responsible to his Maker for his actions, however atrocious they may be, and that in the end, it will be as well with the gambler and the pirate as with the man of virtue and religion. Beware of infidelity! It curses the body, and curses the soul; it curses you in time, and it will curse you through all eternity. Beware of infidelity! It will poison the stream of public morals, and public happiness: it will rob you of your dearest hopes and sweetest comforts: it will rob you of the favour of God; will hang around your dying bed the curtains of gloom and despair. It will lay your body in an unblest grave, and your soul "in the urn of everlasting death!" I have heard the saying, "Cry havoc, and let slip the dogs of war;" but he who encourages infidelity, in a more fearful sense cries "havoc!" and lets slip, not the dogs of war, but the spirits of Pandemonium, and the demons of the pit! Young man, listen to me: I repeat once more what I have said before—your Christian

mother is right—the Bible is true! and if you die without the repentance which it enjoins, and the Saviour which it reveals, mark my word, in the great day of judgment you will wish you had never been born!

SERMON III.

NATURE, SINFULNESS, AND CONSEQUENCES OF UNBELIEF.

He that believeth not, shall be damned.—MARK xvi. 16.

THIS is one of the most awful declarations found in all the sacred volume: and it assumes a character of peculiar interest and solemnity, when we recollect, 1. By whom this declaration was originally made; and 2. The circumstances in which it was made.

By whom was this declaration originally made? It was not by an enemy, but by a Friend—the sinner's best Friend—even the loving tender-hearted Saviour himself. Yes, it is none other than the blessed Jesus, who died for sinners, and before whose judgment-seat we must all one day appear, who said, "He that believeth not, shall be damned." And when did he utter this awful language? In the most interesting circumstances which can well be imagined. It was in his last interview

with his disciples. He had died on the cross; he had risen from the tomb, and he was now just about to ascend to heaven. His disciples are around him, and there is the cloud, like a chariot, hovering over him, and angels waiting to attend him to his home in the sky. In these peculiarly interesting circumstances, our great Redeemer gave his parting charge:—"Go, my disciples, into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved"—here we have the overtures of mercy for those who accept of the way of salvation proposed in the gospel—"but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Here we have solemnly announced the certain doom of those who reject it. Remember, these are among the very last words which fell from the lips of our blessed Saviour, when on earth, and they may well be depended upon; for who can suppose that He, whose love for our race was stronger than death, would use language unnecessarily harsh? or who can for a moment suppose that our Saviour would utter vain words, especially in circumstances of such peculiar interest and solemnity. No, my friends, the declaration in our text may not be lightly regarded: it presents a truth of tremendous import, and must stand for ever—"He that believeth not, shall be damned."

The nature, the sinfulness, and the consequences of unbelief, will now engage our attention.

And First. The *nature* of unbelief. And here we need not enlarge. Unbelief is the opposite of faith. Now, as faith is giving credence to the testimony of God in general, having special reference to the mediatorial character of Christ, as the world's last and only hope, unbelief is the rejection of that testimony. And this may be either speculative or practical—speculative, as when a man looks upon Christianity as a farce, and the Bible as a cunningly devised fable. Unbelievers of this class are certainly embraced in the anathema of the text, "he that believeth not, shall be damned." But unbelief may also be practical, as when a person professes to believe that the Bible is the word of God, and yet is not influenced by the Bible; or, as when a man admits that Christ is a Saviour, and yet receives him not as such; admits that Christ is the only Saviour, and yet treats him as if he were no Saviour at all. In this case, the understanding assents, but the will rebels; the head is right, but the heart is wrong. There is no want of evidence, but a lack of disposition. In both cases the unbelief is substantially the same. Christ is rejected; and as without him there is no Saviour, the condem-

nation of the one, of course, must be as certain as the condemnation of the other. So, then, the anathema of the text is of great compass, and may have reference to some—alas! I fear, to many at this very time. "He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

Second. The *sinfulness* of unbelief. It is manifest, from the whole tenor of the Bible, that whether we can fully understand the matter or not, there is something in the sight of God exceedingly offensive and hateful in the sin of unbelief. No sin, it would appear, calls down heavier wrath than this. Why was it that a whole generation of Jews were cut off from the promised land? The Psalmist says, that with that generation God was not well pleased, and sware, in his wrath, that they should not enter into his rest; and, lo! their carcasses fell in the wilderness, and their bones were made to bleach in the desert, a fearful monument of God's wrath for some sin committed! And what sin? Their strivings, their rebellions, their idolatries? No. Why, then, was it that they were not permitted to enter the promised land? The apostle tells us, in express terms: "They could not enter in, because of unbelief." And when he said this, he seized the opportunity to give needful warning to those to whom he was writing. "Take heed, brethren," says he,

"lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief:" and again, "let us labour to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief." Some eighteen hundred years ago, the Jews were cut off from their land, amid circumstances which indicated special divine wrath. Our Saviour predicted that there would be many signs and wonders and fearful sights connected with the destruction of Jerusalem, such as should cause men's hearts to tremble and fail within them. And the account which Josephus gives is most remarkable and full of terror. He tells us that a meteor, having the appearance of a broad-sword, was seen suspended over Jerusalem, I think, for the space of three years; that voices were heard in the clouds, as of horses and chariots rushing to battle; that the priests who ministered in the holy place, overheard voices in the holy of holies, (where, mark! none but the high-priest was permitted to enter, and he only once a year,) saying, "Let us go hence! let us go hence!" And one thing, which occasioned a greater panic than any thing else, was this:—A person came from the country, presenting a singular appearance, and uttering strange sounds. "A voice!" cried he, "a voice from the east, a voice from the west, a voice from the four winds! Wo to Jerusalem! wo to the temple!" By order

of the magistrates, he was arrested; he was scourged. Josephus affirms that his very bones were laid bare; but he ceased not uttering the same mysterious cry—"A voice from the east! a voice from the west! a voice from the four winds! Wo to Jerusalem! wo to the temple! wo to myself!" And as he uttered these last words—Wo to myself!—a stone from the besieging army struck him, and he fell dead! Moreover, the historian tells us, that when Titus, the Roman commander, had gotten within the walls of the city, and had looked upon the scene of unprecedented distress spread before his eyes, he could not refrain from tears; and, looking up to heaven, he called God to witness that he (Titus) had not brought these calamities upon the Jews; and added, that it was so evident that God was angry with them, that he was afraid not to punish them, lest God should punish him. And whereas, on former occasions, they were driven away from their land and sent into captivity, in some cases for seven, and twelve, and twenty, and even seventy years, now they have been cut off, for, lo! these eighteen hundred years. Now, the question is, why were they thus cut off? The answer is given by the apostle himself: "Because of unbelief they were broken off." Again, as on a former occasion, the apostle seizes the oppor-

tunity to make an improvement of the matter: "Thou standest by faith," says he; "be not high-minded, but fear." There is a passage in our Saviour's conversation with Nicodemus that is very remarkable, and much to the point: "He that believeth on him, (that is, on Christ,) is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already." And why? Mark the reason given: "Because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." Just as if the sin of unbelief were the only sin which condemns the sinner. And in our Saviour's last consolatory address to his disciples, we find another passage equally remarkable, and, if possible, stronger, and yet more to the point: "And when he (the Spirit) is come, he will reprove the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment." Mark! of sin, because they believe not in me! Here it would appear that the grand design of the mission of the Spirit into our world was to produce a conviction of sin. And what sin? Of unbelief.—"Of sin, because they believe not on me."

Is this the only sin which men commit? or are other sins not heinous in the sight of God? This is not the idea intended here to be conveyed. There are many other sins which men commit, and the Bible stamps them as sins very odious and offensive in the

sight of God, but unbelief is the greatest of all: it is that which embraces all others, and, so to speak, swallows them up. Here is the shadow of a cloud passing over the earth. It is distinctly seen; but the shades of night come, and that shadow is lost, being swallowed up in the deeper gloom of the midnight hour. Even so, lying, and fraud, and drunkenness, and Sabbath-breaking, and profane swearing, and all other sins which men commit, heinous as they are, yield to the more heinous and more soul-destroying sin of unbelief. This is emphatically *the* sin, the *crying sin*, the *damning sin!* Those of you who respect the Bible are ready to say, It really does appear, from the Scriptures that it is even so;—but, you may be ready to add, "But, Sir, I must confess, after all, I cannot see wherein consists this exceeding sinfulness of unbelief. I do not know what makes it so peculiarly odious and offensive in the sight of God." Now this is the very point before us—the sinfulness of unbelief. If I mistake not, it chiefly consists in this, that it strikes a blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; would strip the ever blessed God of all of his perfections, and would lay his honour and his throne in the dust.*

I. Unbelief strikes a blow at God the Father,

* Vide Charnock on the Divine Attributes.

Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, pouring contempt upon his *wisdom*. The wisdom of God appears in the garniture of the heavens, in the structure of our bodies, in changing seasons, in the alternations of day and night, in ten thousand things; but when the wisdom of God is spoken of, these things are not once alluded to. The plan of redemption—it is that which looms up. It is that which seems to fill the whole range of vision, human and divine. Before it, all other objects seem to vanish away, as twinkling stars before the rising sun. This is called "the wisdom of God;" "the wisdom of God," in a mystery," and "the manifold wisdom of God." Into this, it is said, the "angels of God desire to look." They are represented as stooping down from their lofty seats in glory, and endeavouring, with holy wonder and delight, to search out this chief display of the wisdom of God; and when Paul refers to it, he breaks out in this language: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!" And well might he say, "O the depth!" for no line of human or angelic intellect can fathom it. For, to save the sinner, and yet maintain the honours of the divine government, it is requisite, not to harmonize jarring elements in the

world of nature, but, to harmonize conflicting attributes in the bosom of the God of nature. Mercy pleads for pardon—Justice demands punishment. "Spare the sinner!" cries Mercy. "Cut him down," says Justice, "why cumbereth he the ground?" "O forgive! forgive!" Mercy weepingly implores—stern Justice frowns, and thunders out, "Satisfaction or death!" Now if Mercy prevails, Justice is humbled; if Justice triumphs, the sinner is lost for ever. But in the cross of Christ all the perfections of God are made to triumph, as if they were one attribute—triumph gloriously! An infinite sacrifice satisfies Divine justice, and the infinitely rich fruits of that sacrifice satisfies Divine mercy. This is the thing into which angels desire to look. This is the thing which causes Paul to exclaim, "O the depth!" It is this which shall wake up the sweetest and the loudest pæans in the world of glory. It is this which, through the mighty roll of everlasting ages, shall fill the great temple of God Almighty with sounding praise! Now this plan, by which God can be just, and yet justify the ungodly who believe in the Son of his love—this plan, which is presented to us in the Scriptures as the "chief display of the wisdom of God," all glorious and divine—unbelief rejects—treats it as though it were unworthy of any regard. Its language is this:

"Paul admires it; angels desire to look into it; and God himself glories in it, as his masterpiece of wisdom—but it is all foolishness! I see nothing in it to excite any admiration—it deserves no regard!" And thus unbelief pours contempt upon the wisdom of God! And is not this a sin, a crying sin, a damning sin? "He that believeth not, shall be damned."

II. Unbelief strikes another blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, pouring contempt upon his *love*. God has given innumerable proofs of his kind regard for our race, but our blessed Saviour points out one, as greater than all others put together. "God," said he, "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish, but have everlasting life." God might have made a brighter light than that which creates our day; he might have made loftier angels, and a greater universe than he has made; but (I speak it with reverence) I see not how an infinite God could have made a greater gift than the gift of his Son—his only begotten and well beloved Son! Here, you perceive, is a draft, not upon the resources of nature, but upon the bosom of the God of nature. O what love was this, that God should so love our lost and ruined world as to give—not treasures of silver and gold—not worlds, nor angels—but his Son, his only

begotten and well beloved Son, that whosoever believeth in him might not perish but have everlasting life! What is the language of John in relation to this matter? "Herein is love," says he, "not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." Note the phrase, "herein is love:" as if he had said, Are you looking out for some commanding proof of love? Look at the cross of Christ! Look at the plan of redemption! Here it is! This is love, indeed! "Love divine, all love excelling." And again, the same apostle says, in the language of perfect admiration: "Behold! what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" As if he had said, Ye angels, behold! Ye winged messengers that compass creation, behold! and do thou, O man, behold! and say, was there ever love like this! But this love, this wondrous, matchless love, unbelief slights; looks upon it with cold indifference; turns away from it with contempt, as if it were not worthy of a single thought; as if it were not worthy of the slightest regard. And call you this no sin? What! to treat with contempt the chief display of the goodness of God! to reject his gift, his dearest and most valued gift! Is this nothing? I knew once a little orphan boy, a motherless child; an elder sister, whom he loved, was displeased with him. The poor

little orphan boy was much distressed, and could not be happy without being restored to his sister's love. Gathering all the little money which he had been accumulating for a long time, amounting to about fifty cents, he laid it all out for a little matter which he thought would please his sister, and sent it to her as a kind of peace-offering, or token of his desire to be on good terms with her. This gift was rejected. It was sent back, and contemptuously dashed upon the floor at his feet. It almost broke his heart. The little orphan boy had laid out all his little store in a present sent to propitiate his sister, whom he loved, and his present was rejected. I repeat it, it almost broke his heart. I was that little orphan boy. I know what it is to have a present rejected; to have my love despised. In some points, this case is in point. God loved the sinner, and sent his Son—gave his Son to die for him. Yes, Christ was the gift of God—so to speak. Christ was God's present to our race. But this gift, this present, is rejected. This expression of God's love is despised. Is not this a sin? Is it not a crying sin? Is it not a damning sin? "He that believeth not, shall be damned."

III. Unbelief strikes another blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, pouring contempt upon his *sovereignty*.

As Creator and King, God has an unquestionable right to legislate for the creatures which he has made. He has legislated for man. In the matter of salvation, God, in his wisdom and love, has devised and revealed a plan whereby he will bestow forgiveness and salvation upon those who accept of the Saviour whom he has provided. And he has positively declared that this is the way of salvation, and that there is no other. Now, unbelief leads the sinner to reject this way, and seek salvation in some other—by his own works of righteousness. It may be, by his prayers, his tears, his deeds of charity; it may be by a moral life, or by penances, or pilgrimages or the absolution of priests, or the intercession of saints. This is all disobedience. It is high-handed rebellion. It speaks this language: God may legislate for the angels, but he shall not legislate for me. He may fix the way of salvation for other men, but he shall not be allowed to fix it for me. I will not regard the will of God—I shall not submit to his authority. His sceptre shall not be extended over me. I will have nothing to do with the Saviour of his providing. In this matter, I will legislate for myself—I will appoint my own Saviour—I choose to be saved in my own way. And is not this striking a blow at the standard of the King of heaven and earth? And is this nothing? Is

not this a sin, a crying sin, a damning sin? "He that believeth not, shall be damned!" O God of mercy, make the sinner to know his transgression and his sin!

IV. Unbelief strikes another blow at God the Father, Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, pouring contempt upon his *truth*. John says, he that believeth the record of God concerning his Son, hath set to his seal that God is true; but he that believeth not, hath made him a liar! What strong language this is, and in what an awful, frightful light, does it present the sin of unbelief! I have seen men excited; I have heard them using towards each other harsh language—abusive language—and yet no act of violence was done; but the moment one said to the other "You are a liar"—that moment the blow was given. This is common, all the world over. I do not say it is right, but I do say, it requires grace, much grace, not to give the blow. And why? In pronouncing a man a liar, you give him the greatest affront which can be given. You pronounce him vile, depraved, void of all moral principle, fit only to be scorned and despised. Now, sinner! O thou who hast rejected Heaven's Darling, remember the words of the apostle, and let conviction seize upon you! Yea, let fear come upon you, and trembling, which shall make all your bones to

shake. By your unbelief you have dishonoured God! You have insulted your Maker! You have made the Ancient of days, the all-glorious, and ever blessed King of the universe a liar! Be sure your sin will find you out. You and God must meet. And if you have committed no other sin on earth, in rejecting Christ, remember, you have one sin resting upon your soul, which, if unrepented of, will press upon you as a mountain—will for ever sink you down. But this is not all. There is another aspect in which we may view the sin of unbelief, and one in which, if possible, it appears in yet darker colours, and more sinful still.

V. Unbelief strikes a blow at God, the Son, pouring contempt upon his *mediatorial character*. Glorious and divine as God the Father is, there is a new loveliness and sweetness thrown around the second Person of the adorable Trinity, as God, man, mediator; possessing in himself both the divine and human nature, he presents all the glories of a God attempered with the milder beauties of a perfect man. Besides, he comes to us as an angel of mercy, a legate from the skies. He comes to accomplish a work of love and reconciliation; to put away our sins by the sacrifice of himself. This invests his character with a new charm. This should make him unspeak-

ably dear to every heart. Every individual, so to speak, should go out to meet him with joy; every one should cordially receive him in the arms of a sweet appropriating faith. But unbelief treats him as if he had no beauty or excellence of character; as if he were no mediator at all. Faith says, This is the rose of Sharon; this is the one altogether lovely! Unbelief says, No; he is a root out of dry ground; he has no form or comeliness; nothing for which we should desire him! And thus unbelief makes light of the great Redeemer, and pours contempt upon all the sweetness and loveliness of his mediatorial character. Martyrs of Jesus! what think ye of this? Angels of God! is this no sin?

VI. Unbelief strikes another blow at God the Son, pouring contempt upon his *mediatorial sufferings.* A good man in distress presents a scene which affects the heart; and if this distress should be on account of another, especially if it should be for our sake, how it would touch our hearts—how it would wake up the strongest and the tenderest feelings in our bosom! But more than a good man is here. It is God's eternal Son. And O! see him in the garden! He is in distress; his soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death! He prays; and what says he? "O! my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; but not

as I will, but as thou wilt!" He prays again with equal anguish. "And again, being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down upon the ground!" And for whom is all this suffering and agony? Not for himself; not for fallen angels; but for sinners of Adam's race. *"For thee, my soul, for thee!"* Is not this enough to melt the hardest heart? Is not this enough to subdue the most obdurate soul? The believer is conquered. Faith, with strong emotion, gazes upon her Redeemer, amid the sorrowful scenes of the garden. She follows him to the cross; sees him nailed to the accursed tree; she sees his precious blood gushing forth, streaming down, and smoking upon the mount; she sees him insulted and reviled, even upon the cross; she witnesses his dying agonies; she hears his last prayer, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!" Clasping the cross, crimsoned with the blood of her incarnate God, she exclaims:—Here is the last hope of a dying world! Here is *my* hope—*my only hope!*

"My Lord, my Life, my Sacrifice,
My Jesus, and my All!"

But unbelief weeps not, feels not, cares not; looks on with cold indifference; is touched neither by the sorrows of the garden, nor the

agonies of the cross; looks upon the whole as a picture, or a farce; and, at the very foot of the cross, can freely indulge in that sin which made the Saviour bleed and die. O! unbelief! unbelief! Thou makest light of that which might make angels weep! Thou makest light of that which caused the sun to withhold its light; which rent the vail of the temple; which burst the rocks, and shook the earth, and heaved out the dead! Thou hast slighted, thou hast rejected Him who died for thee! And is this no sin? One of Pennsylvania's favourite sons, some years ago, heard me preach Christ, and him crucified. I noticed that his eyes were fixed upon me, and his feelings were stirred within him. Upon the conclusion of the service, I called at his office. (He was a lawyer.) I found him in great distress. I asked him what was the matter. "O sir!" replied he, with strong emotion, "I feel that I am one of the greatest sinners that ever breathed the breath of life!" "What is the sin which troubles you most?" "Sir," said he, "I have rejected the Saviour thirty years. I do not see how it is possible for me to be forgiven!" And well may this remind us of the words of the Saviour: "When the Spirit is come, he will reprove the world of sin, because they believe not on me!" Ah! my brethren, the rejection of a dying Saviour!—this is em-

phatically the sin, the crying sin, the damning sin! "He that believeth not, shall be damned." But, to crown the matter, once more,

VII. Unbelief *would rob the Saviour of his mediatorial reward!* "For the joy that was set before him," says the apostle, "he endured the cross, despising the shame." What joy was this? The joy of leading many sons and daughters to glory. The joy of snatching millions, unnumbered millions, from hell, and landing them in heaven. The joy of seeing them made happy by his sufferings; happy beyond description, happy for ever and for ever more! For this joy, which was set before him, which was promised in the counsels of eternity—for this joy, he endured the cross, despising the shame. This is a beautiful and tender thought. It would seem that this idea was immediately and constantly before the mind of the Saviour, amid all the sufferings of the cross, and the ignominy thereof—that he was not suffering in vain; that it was for the accomplishment of a great and good object; for the salvation of a ruined world. Now, unbelief says, This object shall not be attained. This joy he shall not have. He shall return to the skies as one defeated, without one trophy—without one of Adam's race to sing his praise. God, the Father, had said, "Therefore will I divide him a portion with the great,

and he shall divide the spoil with the strong, because he hath poured out his soul unto death; and he was numbered with the transgressors, and he bare the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors." But if unbelief prevails, this reward will not be his. He will not "divide a portion with the great," nor "the spoil with the strong." In vain will he have borne the sin of many, in vain will he have made intercession for the transgressors. All that he has done and suffered for the redemption of man will be in vain. Having undertaken to carry out the scheme of redemption, he will have failed. Having entered upon the conflict with the powers of darkness, they will have triumphed. The Son of God will have been defeated—the great plan of redemption will have proved a failure. The tide of salvation must roll back; the whole human family must go down to the pit, and the curtain of despair must hang around them for ever! Yes, my brethren, this is the direct tendency of unbelief; the natural workings of this great evil—this damning sin. No wonder, then, that these were amongst the last words which fell from the lips of the ascending Saviour—"He that believeth not, shall be damned."

Having pointed out, as clearly as we could,

the nature and the sinfulness of unbelief, we are now to show,

VIII. The *consequence* of unbelief. On such a subject we would not speak flippantly. We would speak with great solemnity; for it is one of tremendous import. We can do no better than earnestly to request and entreat you to muse upon the language of our text; the words, the last parting words of our blessed and ascending Saviour—"He that believeth not, shall be damned." And what is it to be damned? It is to have all the sins you have ever committed fastened upon your poor soul for ever. It is to have no part in the first resurrection, but to be imprisoned in the tomb until the second blast of the trump, louder than a thousand thunders and more awful than the hoarse crash of falling worlds, shall call you up to the resurrection of the lost! What is it to be damned? It is to be placed upon the left hand of the Judge in the great day of accounts. It is to be grouped with murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, with thieves, with robbers, with pirates, with liars, with drunkards, with all the mean and all the vile, and all the abominable gathered from earth and hell, and with them to hear the dreadful sound, "Depart!" What is it to be damned? It is to go away into everlasting punishment, into the blackness of

darkness, into the pit that has no bottom, and into the fire which is never to be quenched! What is it to be damned? It is to be cut off from God and all his angels, from the ransomed and all our pious friends—from heaven and all its joys. It is to be deprived of all peace and all comfort; of all hope and all expectation. It is to be given over to all the thraldom of sin, to all the thrillings of remorse, to all the agonies of despair. It is to be ruined and undone! Lost! lost! lost for ever! O! who can bear the thought of being damned for ever? Shall any lift up their eyes in torment? Shall any have, in the world of woe, to send up the sad and mournful lamentation—"The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved?" Heaven forbid! But are there not here some impenitent, unbelieving sinners? They are the very ones who are exposed to the anathema of the text. O! careless mariner upon the sea of life, breakers are ahead! O! thoughtless traveller to great eternity, a fearful pit is before you! Danger is nigh, even at the door; and do you ask, What is to be done? Would to God that this cry was coming up from all parts of this congregation! It is the pentecostal cry. It is the cry of the three thousand who were convicted and converted on the day of

Pentecost. And was not this, too, the anxious inquiry of the Philippian jailor: "O sirs, what must I do to be saved?" It has been put, by many in every age, and has resulted in peace and joy. Is any disposed to propound this question? God be gracious to all such! There is hope for all!—aye, and even in the very verse whence our text is taken; for, if we find it there written, "He that believeth not, shall be damned," we find it there also written, "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." Thank God, you need not perish. O listen to the sweet words of the Saviour again: "He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." How cheering! how charming is the voice; how sweet the tidings are!

There is another thing which is most encouraging to the sin-sick soul, and that also is in close connection with our text. In our Saviour's last charge, which contains our text, he gave commandment to his disciples to go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke xxiv. 47. Only think—Jerusalem! The very place where his murderers dwelt; the very place where they crowned him with thorns; where they smote him upon the cheek, where they spit in his face, where they nailed him to the cross, and where they gave him vinegar and gall to

drink in the hour of his deepest agony! and where, after his death, as he foresaw, the unfeeling soldier thrust his spear into his side!—As if he had said, "Go, my disciples, and preach that gospel which breathes good will toward all mankind, which opens the gates of paradise to a dying world—preach that gospel first to my enemies! Go, tell those priests and pharisees, those scribes and elders, who longed for the time to come when they should feast their eyes with my streaming veins, and regale their ears with my dying groans—go, tell them that they never so thirsted for my blood as I have desired their salvation. Go, find out those soldiers who platted a crown of thorns and put it upon my head—tell them that I, by my streaming blood, have bought for them crowns of glory, and no rugged thorns shall be found in those crowns of glory! Go, my disciples, and tell that man who spit in my face how freely Jesus can forgive! Go, my disciples, and find out those who nailed me to the cross, and tell them that I am now willing to put under them my pierced hands, and raise them to thrones in the highest heavens, and no nails shall be driven into their hands! Go, my disciples, and search for that man who gave me vinegar and gall to drink in the hour of my deepest agony, and tell him that I freely

offer him the cup of salvation, and no drop of vinegar or gall shall be found in that cup! Go, my disciples, find out that soldier who thrust his spear into my side, and tell him that there is a nearer way to my heart.—Blessed Jesus! who can resist thy matchless grace, thy dying love? It is enough! We see that thou art able and willing to save the chief of sinners, even the vilest of the vile! O! that every sinner would respond, "It is enough! blessed Redeemer! glorious Saviour! I will reject thee no more! 'I yield, I yield; I can hold out no longer—By dying love compelled, I own thee conqueror!' I repent in dust and ashes! I take thee now on *thy* terms, on *any* terms. 'Here, Lord, I give myself away, 'tis all that I can do!'"

Welcome, welcome, dear Redeemer,
  Welcome to this heart of mine;
Lord, I make a full surrender,
  Every power and thought be thine.
    Thine entirely,
  Through eternal ages thine!

SERMON IV.

JUSTIFICATION.

Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: by whom also we have access, by faith, into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God.—Rom. v. 1, 2.

No truth is more certain than this, that we are sinners; yea, that all have sinned, and have come short of the glory of God, for the apostle John says, "If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us." But another truth, equally certain, is this: that the great God with whom we have to do, is pure and holy—cannot look upon sin with allowance, and has positively declared that he will, by no means, clear the guilty. These things being so, a question here presents itself, Who can be just with God? This is a question of immense importance to our race, and one which, without divine illumination, I verily believe neither man nor angel can solve. This very subject the apostle handles in the preceding context. After affirming that God hath concluded all under sin, that every mouth might be stopped, and all the world become guilty before God, and that, consequently, by the deeds of the law no flesh could be justified in his sight—after showing that man, by reason of sin, was in himself absolutely ruined

and undone, he proceeds to speak of the plan of justification proposed in the gospel, and winds up with these emphatic words: "Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law." Having met an objection or two, which he saw would be urged against the doctrine, he then, in beautiful language, lays before us some of the rich blessings which accompany or flow from a state of justification with God, we purpose now to present,

I. The great doctrine of Justification; and

II. Some of the blessings connected with it.

I. *The great doctrine of Justification.*—We hesitate not to pronounce it a great doctrine. In the whole range of theology there is none of more vital importance than this, for it is nothing less than the mode of the sinner's acceptance with God, and a mistake here may be fatal. It becomes us then, diligently to attend to this matter, particularly as error on the subject is abroad, and these are backed by some of the strongest feelings of human nature. It is no uncommon thing to hear a remark of this kind: I know that I am a sinner—I know that I have done some evil deeds, but I have also done some things, many things that are good, and God is merciful.—The idea is this: the sinner purposes to balance his good and evil deeds, and hopes that the good will pre-

ponderate, and upon this he bases his hopes of heaven: or, if he has any misgivings on the subject, and fears that his good deeds may not outweigh his evil, he trusts that the breath of mercy will turn the scale in his favour, adding as much of the righteousness of Christ as may be sufficient to make up what is wanting in his own. Believe me, this is not Heaven's plan. No such idea falls in with the great doctrine of grace taught in the sacred volume; and no such patch-robe righteousness will be seen within all the precincts of the heavenly world. Even in Protestant lands, where the Bible is more commonly read, error abounds. The natural pride of man leads him astray. That self-righteous spirit, so deeply seated in the human bosom, causes many to embrace notions on the subject which are not scriptural, which are not true. And with regard to papal lands, the whole system taught in relation to auricular confession, penance, the merits of saints, purgatory, and the like, is directly calculated to mislead souls, and cause them to embrace fatal error. Indeed, this error is brought to a point. It is made to assume a palpable and authoritative form, as may be seen in the decrees of the Council of Trent, which, of course, are binding upon the whole Roman Catholic world. The decree on the article of Justification is in substance this: Whoever shall affirm

that a man is justified by faith alone, let him be accursed. Martin Luther, being still alive, and remembering the words of the apostle Paul, "therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law"—and also this language, "not of works, lest any man should boast"—Martin Luther, I say, filled with holy indignation, grasped his pen, and besides other language, wrote these words in a very solemn protest: "I, Martin Luther, an unworthy preacher of the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, thus profess and thus believe that this article, that *faith alone*, without works, can justify before God, shall never be overthrown, neither by the Emperor, nor by the Turk, nor by the Tartar, nor by the Pope, with all his cardinals, bishops, sacrificers, monks, nuns, kings, princes, powers of the world, nor yet by all devils in hell.—This is the doctrine I teach. In this I will abide. Amen." And to this I trust all are ready to respond Amen, for believe me, in the sight of a holy God all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, and none but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. The poet has well said,

"The best obedience of my hands
Dare not appear before thy throne,
But Faith can answer thy demands,
By pleading what my Lord hath done."

But let us proceed to the matter in hand.

According to the Scriptures the term Justification has a forensic character, and simply means the declaring or pronouncing a person righteous according to law; that is, acquitted, not exposed to the penalty. "If," says Moses, "there be a controversy between men, and they come into judgment, that the judges may judge them, then they shall justify the righteous, and condemn the wicked." And now, as to condemn a person in a court of law on earth, is not to make that person guilty, but simply to pronounce him so in the eyes of the law, even so, in the reverse case, to justify a man is not to make him just, but simply to pronounce him so according to law—not exposed to the penalty.

Justification is either legal or evangelical. If a man could be found on earth who had never sinned, he might be justified in a way strictly legal; for, no law having been violated, no penalty has been incurred; but as according to the Scriptures, all have sinned, so, according to the Scriptures, by the deeds of the law no flesh can be justified in the sight of God. In these circumstances, if there can be no expedient devised for satisfying the claims of the law and justice of God, the sinner's case is hopeless, his doom is sealed, and he is lost for ever! But now comes the Bible plan of justification, which stamps this volume with

infinite value, and gives it pre-eminence over every other—the Bible plan of justification, which is as a beam of light in a dark day, or the sight of a habitation to one bewildered and lost. And what is this plan? Justification by the righteousness of another—even the Lord Jesus Christ, who was wounded for our transgressions, and bruised for our iniquities—who, his own self, bare our sins in his own body upon the tree. How numerous are the passages of Scripture which teach the great doctrine of the atonement, or the substitutionary sacrifice of Christ. What is the language of Paul? "He was made sin for us who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." And what is the language of the apostle John? "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." And what says the Saviour himself? "I am the good shepherd; the good shepherd giveth his life for his sheep." And again: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life for the sheep." And if you note the song of the redeemed in heaven, you will find that they all, unitedly and with loud voices, ascribe their salvation to him who loved them and washed them from their sins in his own blood. This is the name by which he is known to every true member of the Church on earth

and in heaven, "*The Lord our Righteousness.*" Yes, it is in and through Christ alone that we can find acceptance with God. We can make no satisfaction to the violated law and justice of God. Christ is our only hope—without him we perish, but united to him we are safe—clothed upon with the robe of his righteousness

"God will pronounce the sinner just,
And take the saint to heaven."

But how are we to get this justifying righteousness? How are we, so to speak, to make it our own?—for all legal purposes our own? There is no difficulty. The Bible is very clear upon this subject. Notice the language of our text: "Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." This falls in precisely with what is said in another place: "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth." And again: "To him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." The main idea is this: Faith appropriates the righteousness of Christ; it is the hand which lays hold of it, and puts it down to our account. In other words, the Spirit working faith in us, links us to Christ, in our effectual calling; so that, in the eyes of the law, we are one with him. If he be accounted righteous,

we shall be accounted righteous, too; and if he be accepted, we, for his sake, shall be accepted also; for, according to the Scriptures, the union between Christ and believers is represented by similitudes peculiarly striking and strong. Is he the vine? Believers are the branches. Is he the head? Believers are the members. Is he the bridegroom? Believers are the bride: and the apostle, in a certain place, uses language still stronger, when he says, We are members of his body, and of his flesh, and of his bones. How intimate is this union! how indissoluble! Hence the triumphant language of the apostle: "Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth: who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather, that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?—shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors, through him that hath loved us. For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is Christ Jesus our Lord."

This naturally leads us to speak of the

blessings consequent upon a state of justification with God. But that we may be better prepared to solace ourselves with these things, it will be proper to notice, as the apostle did, some objections which have been made to the doctrine of salvation by faith, without works.

It has been objected—1. That it militates against the doctrine taught by James. And we confess, at first view, the objection appears to have much force; but when examined, we find it has no force at all. What is the language of Paul? "Therefore, we conclude that a man is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law." And what says James: "Ye see then, brethren, how that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only." I admit that there is a discrepancy in the language, a downright contradiction, if you please, and yet the two apostles are harmonious in sentiment. They must be, for they were inspired by one and the same Spirit, and there is no difficulty in reconciling their language. It is no uncommon thing for different persons to use different and very opposite language, and yet mean the very same thing. For example: A. and B. are speaking about you. A. says you are a mortal man, and must soon die. B. says you are immortal, and can never die, but must live for ever. Do these individuals differ in sentiment in relation to you?

Not at all. But in speaking about you, they have not reference to the same thing. When A. said, you are a mortal man, and must soon die, he had reference to your body. When B. said, you are immortal, and must live for ever, he had reference to your soul. Now, although the language is contradictory, yet really there is no diversity of sentiment. They believe the very same thing. So in the case before us. The language of the two apostles is contradictory; but mark, they are not speaking about the same thing. Examine the case, and you will find it is even so. Paul is speaking about justification before God, James about justification before man. In Paul's epistle to the Romans, 3d chapter, 19th and 20th verses, we find these words: "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them that are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world be found guilty before God. Therefore by the deeds of the law, there shall no flesh be justified in his sight." Paul, you perceive, speaks of justification in the sight of God. But by reference to James ii. 15, 16, and 17, you will find that this apostle is speaking of a different matter altogether. "If a brother or a sister be naked and destitute of daily food, and one of you say, Depart in peace, be ye warmed, and be ye filled; notwithstanding ye give them not those

things which are needful to the body; what doth it profit? Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone. Yea, a man may say, Thou hast faith, and I have works: show me thy faith without thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Paul speaks of justification in the sight of God; James of justification in the sight of man. Paul tells us how a person may become a Christian by faith; James tells us how a person may prove himself to be a Christian by works. There is no discrepancy. The objection is annihilated. But it is objected, 2. That this doctrine of justification by faith alone, without the deeds of the law, is a dangerous doctrine. It makes good works of no account. It nullifies the law, sets it aside as a dead letter, and makes it void. It is remarkable that the apostle adverts to this very objection, and shows that it is entirely groundless. "Do we, then, make void the law, through faith? God forbid! We establish the law." And what makes this more remarkable, is this:—This method of anticipating objections, and putting them down, is very common in the Scriptures. Thus in regard to the doctrine of regeneration, when our Saviour said, "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," the objection urged by many is represented as having been

made by Nicodemus—"How can these things be?" and put down thus: "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again. The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; so is every one that is born of the Spirit." Take another case. Some persons deny the doctrine of the supreme divinity of Christ. On what ground? Mystery. Now what says Paul? "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." The apostle admits the mystery, but insists upon it that the doctrine is true, notwithstanding, without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh. Again, some persons object to the doctrine of election. The apostle was aware that the doctrine would not be liked by some; and therefore, after presenting the doctrine very strongly in these words, "Therefore hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy, and whom he will he hardeneth," he himself immediately starts the objection: "Thou wilt then say unto me, Wherefore doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will?"—meets it in this way: "Nay, but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the

same lump to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour?" So also with regard to the doctrine of the final perseverance of saints. Do any object that the doctrine cannot be true, because they have known some to die in sin who were once converted? See how John meets that objection: "They went out from us, because they were not of us; but they went out, that it might be made manifest that they were not all of us." This being the usual way of meeting objections, it is used in the case before us. "Do we, then, make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law."

I might, if it were necessary, prove what the apostle affirms. Just take this view of the matter: The sinner is awakened; he finds that he has broken God's righteous law; his sins come rolling over his soul. They are a burden too heavy for him to bear. He at first seeks relief in his own way; he goes about from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, from resolution to resolution; thus endeavouring to establish his own righteousness, but all in vain. He finds no peace; the burden is upon him still. Now he begins to think his case is a peculiar one; fears that his day of grace is over, and there is no hope for him. When just ready to despair, Christ is presented as a needful, suitable, all-sufficient Saviour. The sinner is enabled, by

faith, to receive him cordially as he is offered in the gospel. And now his burden is gone; and now, Christ being formed in his heart, the hope of glory, love to the Redeemer becomes the ruling passion of his soul, and

> "'Tis love which makes our willing feet
> In swift obedience move."

Aye, there is nothing like love to rouse the soul, and stir it up to all holy and cheerful obedience. Hence the language of the apostle, "The love of Christ constraineth us;" and the language of a certain martyr, "I cannot argue for my Saviour, but I can die for him." "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid! Yea, we establish the law."

The great and precious doctrine of justification having been thus explained and vindicated, we proceed to lay before you,

II. Some of the blessings which accompany or flow from a state of justification with God. 1. "Being justified by faith, we have peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ." O what a blessing this is! Eliphaz certainly thought it of great value; hence his language to Job, "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace with him; thereby good shall come unto thee." Before the sinner embraces the Saviour in the arms of an appropriating faith, there is a controversy between him and his

Maker. He is an enemy to God by wicked works—yea, a child of wrath and heir of hell. All the feelings of his unrenewed nature are arrayed against God, and all the perfections of God are arrayed against him. But now, united to Christ by faith, there is a change, both in the sinner's state and condition. The enmity of his heart is slain; the rebellion of his will is subdued. Vanquished by grace divine, he who once rebelled against his Maker now rebels no more, and he who was once the sinner's adversary, is now his adversary no longer. Peace is made. A work of reconciliation is accomplished; and, so to speak, a covenant of amity is ratified on earth and in heaven. Every thing is new and pleasant now. The sinner's state is changed; his character is changed; his views, his feelings, his prospects, all are changed. He enters, as it were, into a new world, and all is peace now. The stormy cloud is gone, and the rainbow of promise spans the heavens. No lurid lightnings flash, no pealing thunders roar. Sinai's terrors are all over and gone. No voice of alarm now; no sentence of condemnation; no fear of wrath any more! This is a great matter. Only think—peace with God, the great God, the glorious God, against whom we have sinned, and before whose judgment-bar we must one day appear! What is like it—to be

compared with it? I have seen peace made amongst men. I have seen those who long were at variance reconciled. I have seen them giving to each other the right hand of fellowship, in token of cordial reconciliation and mutual love. It was a lovely sight. It was worthy of an angel's visit from the skies. When, upon the close of the Revolutionary struggle, the intelligence was received that preliminaries of peace were signed in Paris, what a wave of delight passed over the whole land. The doorkeeper of Congress Hall, we are told, swooned with joy. What bonfires, what illuminations, and what rejoicings, every where! every eye sparkled; every tongue was loosed; every face was dressed in smiles, and every heart thrilled with rapture! O, it was a blessed scene! It was a glorious affair! But peace with God! how infinitely more delightful, more joyous, must this be! Peace with him who holds our lives in his hand, our souls, our all; who can raise us to heaven, or sink us down to hell; who can make us unspeakably happy, or miserable to all eternity. Peace with God! what joy on earth and in heaven! The tidings are carried to the world above; heaven rings jubilee; saints and angels tune their harps anew, and pæans loud and sweet are heard throughout all the realms of glory! And well may it be so, for an immortal soul is snatched

from ruin; the fires of the pit are quenched; the great God of heaven and earth becomes the sinner's Friend!—yea, smiles with ineffable sweetness upon him, and for him prepares a sparkling crown, a throne of glory, and joys which shall never end! And, to make this glorious peace better still, it is settled upon a sure foundation—it is through our Lord Jesus Christ. It is purchased by his death, it is inspired by his Spirit, and guarantied by the blood of his cross. If this peace were dependent upon any thing in us, it would be most precarious; but no, thank God, we have this peace through our Lord Jesus Christ, who is ever worthy, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever! O! how will the possession of this peace sweeten the bitterest cup, and brighten the darkest scene! How it will soften the dying hour, and cause the Christian to exult and triumph amid the solemnities of the last closing scene! But this is not all. 2. Being justified by faith, we have not only peace with God, but we also have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand. We are not only pardoned, we are accepted. We are permitted to come into the presence chamber of our God, with all the feelings of a child, and all the assurance of Divine love.

"Our faith shall Abba, Father, cry,
And thou the kindred own!"

A rebel may be pardoned by his prince, and yet not permitted to come into his presence. Absalom's crime in slaying his brother Ammon was forgiven by David, his father, but he must not see his face. "Let him not see my face," said David. But here is the blessedness of a state of justification with God; it not only brings us into a state of peace with God, but nearness to him—yes, permits us by faith to draw near unto God, with all holy reverence and assurance, as children to a father, able and ready to help us in every time of need. O blessed state! O glorious privilege! How precious to the patriarch Jacob when, fearing the wrath of Esau, he turned aside and prayed this prayer: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, Lord, lest he come and smite me, and the mother, and the children." How precious to king Hezekiah, when sick, and admonished by the prophet to prepare for death, he turned his face to the wall, and prayed to the Lord, and wept sore, and was heard in that which he feared. And how precious is this privilege to the people of God in every age—what time afflictions come, and the waves of sorrow begin to roll! Yes, what though the sunshine of prosperity be clouded, and the dark night of affliction envi-

ron us on every side; what though the dew of death be upon our cold brow, and the shades of death be upon our faded eye; what though we be in the very midst of the dark valley, and the waves be rolling at our feet—if God, as our covenant God and Father, be with us, we have a sweet solace—we are safe—we are happy! for our days of mourning are ended, and heaven is at hand.

But this leads me to speak of a third benefit connected with a state of justification with God. Not only have we peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ—not only have we also nearness of access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, we are permitted to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. This was what Moses so much desired. And Moses said unto God, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory." And the Lord said unto Moses, "I will make all my goodness to pass before thee, and I will proclaim the name of the Lord; and it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand, for there shall no man see me and live." But in heaven there shall be no occasion for the cleft of a rock, nor for the covering, for there we shall see God face to face—we shall see the king in his beauty—shall see him amid all the splendours of that eternal world of glory! O, how rap-

turous will this vision be, and how transforming! for there, we all, as with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, shall be changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord. Brethren! Bright prospects are before the believer; great things are in reserve for him. A crown of glory, a throne of glory, a weight of glory, an eternal weight of glory, an exceeding and eternal weight of glory! Yes, child of God, hear it, and let your heart leap for joy! When you reach your eternal home, you will have glory above you, and glory beneath you, and glory around you! You will swim in glory as in the sun-light of heaven! All these things are in reserve for you, and you may rejoice in the sure hope of them. Yes, you need not wait until the heavens are rolled together as a scroll. You need not wait until the voice of the archangel shall announce that your coronation day is come. No, nor wait even until this mortality shall have put on immortality; you are now permitted to anticipate things to come; you are even now permitted to rejoice in hope of the glory of God. O! who would not be a Christian? Sinner, would you? Then come to Christ. He calls, he bids you come. O, come now! God help you to come! Amen!

SERMON V.

NAAMAN.

Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean? So he turned and went away in a rage.—2 KINGS v. 12.

THE account given of Naaman in this chapter is truly interesting and instructive. It furnishes an exact delineation of the human character, and is a complete developement of the pride and carnality of the natural, or unrenewed man. Naaman was a great man, in the popular sense of that term. He had been raised to a high military station, and had justified the confidence reposed in him. Leading forth the hosts of the king of Syria, he marched against the enemies of his country. He was victorious, and returned to Syria crowned with laurels, and greeted with the acclamations of his grateful countrymen. The king himself honoured him; and he was acknowledged by all, as the political saviour of his country: because, that "by him the Lord had given deliverance to Syria." Crowned with laurels, and enriched with spoils, he stood upon a proud eminence; the boast of his country, the admiration of all! Yet, there was one thing against him; one thing to humble the pride of his heart—he was a leper. This leprosy was

a loathsome disease. It was a certain breaking out upon the body, and was of such a nature as to mar the beauty of the person, and to make him an object of loathing to those around; insomuch, that by a law of Moses, the leper was required to be separated from the congregation, as unclean, unfit to mingle with society: and we find that this law was rigidly enforced, in every instance of leprosy. The highest characters in the nation were not exempted from its operation. Hence, you may recollect that when king Uzziah was smitten with leprosy in the house of the Lord, he was not only put out of the house of the Lord, but was driven from his palace; made to inhabit a separate house; and when he died, he was not buried in the royal sepulchre, but in a certain field belonging to the kings—because he was a leper! This being the case, we may well suppose that few wished to be Naaman, with all his wealth, his splendour, and renown. Indeed, the Syrian conqueror would, no doubt, himself most willingly have exchanged a palace for a cottage, could he only in this way have been delivered from the leprosy which cleaved to him. Whilst you see Naaman seated under a gilded canopy, amid all the insignia of wealth and honour, perhaps no other feelings are awakened in your bosom than those of loathing and disgust. You would not be a Naaman,

with all his pomp, with all his riches, and with all his renown—and why? Because he is a leper! But now, whilst you turn away from a leprous Naaman—whilst your very heart sickens at the thought of his impurities—O tell me, may there not be some here, covered with a leprosy of a more loathsome, more dangerous kind? I mean the leprosy of sin! And what though this leprosy should not cut off the leper from the congregation and society here below—mark my word, if uncleansed, it must, it will, cut him off from a better congregation, and a more glorious society, in a better world than this; for

"Those holy gates for ever bar
Pollution, sin, and shame;
None shall obtain admittance there
But followers of the Lamb."

In speaking further from the words of our text, I wish to notice some points of resemblance between a leprous Naaman and an awakened sinner; and I am free to say, I do think that the points of resemblance are very exact.

I. *Both are diseased.*—Naaman was a leper, so also is the sinner; and although the leprosy of the one was of a natural or physical character, and the leprosy of the other, moral or spiritual, yet in several particulars they strongly resemble each other. Was the leprosy of Naaman polluting? So also is the leprosy of

sin. Indeed, there is nothing more polluting than sin. It mars all beauty, and makes the subject thereof loathsome and abominable in the sight of a pure and holy God. Hence the language of Isaiah, "Wo is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts." And hence, also, the language of the man of Uz: "I have heard of thee, by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee, wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Was the leprosy of Naaman destructive of happiness? There is nothing in all the universe more destructive of all happiness than sin. It is that which has ruined angels, and ruined man! It is that which has occasioned every tear of sorrow, every sigh of grief, and every pang of agony! It is that which has withered every thing that is fair, blasted every thing that is good, and made bitter every thing that is sweet! It is that which has dried up every spring of comfort, and rolled a tide of sorrow far and wide! Was the leprosy of Naaman a deadly disease, not to be cured by any mortal power? So, also, is the leprosy of sin. It strikes its roots deep into the centre of the soul; generates therein a worm which shall never die; and kindles therein a fire never to be quenched. It spreads

disease and death over the whole moral man! Yes, and the awakened sinner is sensible of his spiritual maladies. He remembers the words of the prophet: "The whole head is sick; the whole heart is faint. From the sole of the foot, even unto the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds, and bruises, and putrefying sores." The understanding is darkened, the heart is hard, the will rebellious, and the conscience seared. Every thing is wrong! There is a deep and total depravity! If there be some good affections, they are mixed up with sin; if some amiable traits of character, they are like blocks of marble, and beautiful columns in a house not plumb; or, like the mechanism of a watch, which has been magnetized, and therefore not fit for use. Something must be done! There must be some renovating process—aye, and something accomplished by a Divine power, or the sinner's case is hopeless. He is ruined and undone for ever! But this leads me to remark,

II. *Both Naaman and the awakened sinner are miserable.* They have trouble and distress —really can enjoy nothing.—Naaman, crowned with laurels, and enriched with spoils, wanted nothing, it seems, to make him happy, but a healthful and vigorous body. Wanting this, the man is wretched. Ah! what is all the pomp of royalty—what all the splendour of

wealth, and the delicacy of viands, to one unfitted to enjoy them? Even so it is with the awakened sinner. It may be fair and serene without; it is not so within, for the wicked are as the troubled sea which cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. A sudden death alarms him; awful dispensations of Providence force painful convictions upon his mind; or, perchance, conflicting passions rage within, and make him wretched. Now, too, it may be, the sunshine of prosperity is darkened; the clouds of adversity are lowering around. The sinner feels, or thinks he feels, the mud walled cottage trembling, breaking down, and, alas! for him, he has no building of God; no house made without hands, eternal, and on high! And now, also, it may be, conscience wakes to sleep no more. Remorse for the past throws his thoughts upon the future; worse dread of the future strikes them back upon the past! He turns, and turns, and finds no ray. Does the clock strike, he is ready to cry out with the despairing, dying Altamont: "O time! time! it is fit that thou shouldst thus strike thy murderer to the heart! How art thou fled for ever! A month, a day; I ask not for years, though an age were too little for the much which I have to do!" Or, say, he is no despairing, dying Altamont—Is he an awakened sinner? he is not at rest—he is not happy—he

cannot be! In the possession of riches, of honours, of "all the world calls good or great," "his heart distrustful asks, if this be joy?" There is a burden upon his soul—the burden of sin—a burden too heavy for him to bear. Amid the pursuits of the day, his mind is thoughtful; amid the shades of the night his eyes are wakeful. He sighs! He groans inwardly. He knows not what to do. He knows not where to turn—is ready to ask, What must I do? Is ready to cry out, God be merciful to me a sinner! O yes, the awakened sinner is not happy; he is miserable; he feels wretched. He is, perhaps, almost ready to wish he had never been born. He feels that he is a sinner, and knows not how to get rid of his sins. He knows he must die, and his conscience tells him that he is not prepared to die. He believes that after death comes the judgment, and alas! what will become of him in the judgment day! He is ready to exclaim, O that I were a Christian! I would give the world only to have the Christian's hope! This leads me to notice another point of resemblance between a leprous Naaman and an awakened sinner.

III. *Both are willing to go far and do much to obtain a cure*—are willing to do any thing, if they can only obtain the object desired, *in their own way*.—To be delivered from his leprosy,

Naaman was willing, for a season, to withdraw from the splendours of a court, the adulations of his flatterers, and the caresses of his countrymen:—he was willing to come all the way from Syria to Samaria—moreover, he was willing to give ten talents of silver, six thousand pieces of gold, and ten changes of raiment; nay, he was willing to do almost anything in the world, if by that means he could get rid of the leprosy which cleaved to him. Just so it is with the awakened sinner: he is willing to go far and do much to obtain salvation. If he were required to perform penances, or go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, or brave the fury and storm of battle;—if he were required to bestow all his goods to feed the poor, and give his body to be burned—or leap down the falls of Niagara, to secure salvation, I believe he would willingly do it!—any thing, if he can only be permitted to have his own way, and purchase salvation. O, how the awakened sinner does long to ride to heaven in a chariot of his own! How he does long to wash his robes, and make them white, by the labour of his own hands! A legal spirit is deeply seated in his bosom. It is a part of his unrenewed nature; hence, every sinner, when awakened, immediately goes about to work out his own righteousness. He goes from duty to duty, from ordinance to ordinance, from resolution to resolution; thus

endeavouring to establish a righteousness of his own. Forgetting the words of the apostle, "By grace are ye saved, through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast:" forgetting, I say, all this, he labours hard to merit salvation, and thus be his own Saviour. But, as a person may go one hundred leagues, and not reach a place only one mile distant—because he does not go in the right way—so many a sinner, greatly desiring to obtain salvation, has done much to obtain it, and yet has failed. And why? Because he has indulged in a legal spirit—has sought salvation by the works of the law, and not by faith. This leads to another point of resemblance between the Syrian leper and the awakened sinner:

IV. *Both are at first dissatisfied with the remedy proposed.*—Although Naaman knew that his leprosy was a loathsome and deadly disease; although he was willing to come all the way from Syria to Samaria; although he was willing to part with his talents of silver, and his pieces of gold, and his changes of raiment; although he was willing to do almost any thing in the world, to be cured of his leprosy; yet, when he comes to the house of the prophet, and finds how simple and humiliating are the terms proposed, his pride is wounded, and he turns away in a rage. Mark the pride

of the man! "What!" says he, "surely the prophet does not know who I am! Does he know that I am Syria's chieftain?—that I have come in pomp and splendour, with my horses and my chariot—with my silver and my gold? Does he know that I am the favourite of my king, and the idol of my countrymen?—that I am a rich man, a great man, a man of war, and a mighty man? And will he not come out and pay me that respect due to my rank and character? He sends a messenger to me. A messenger! I expected more than this! Behold, I thought he himself would come out to me, and stand, and call upon the Lord his God, and strike his hand over the place, and recover the leper! I thought he would cure me in a manner comporting with my dignity. But not so! He sends a messenger to me! And, pray, what is his message? He tells me to go and bathe in Jordan seven times! And why in Jordan? Does not that contemptible stream belong to that contemptible people, many of whom I have recently conquered, and led captive into my own land? Then, why in Jordan! I see what the man would be aiming at! He would have me dip in Jordan, and thus acknowledge myself indebted to the Jews for a cure!—I will die a leper first! What! such a man as I? a rich man, a great man, a mighty man, the conqueror of the Jews—such

a man as I am, acknowledge myself indebted to the Jews for a cure? Not I! I'll die a leper a thousand times first! 'Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them, and be clean?'" So he turned and went away in a rage. Wretched man! he would be wretched, because he would be proud. He is a leper, a loathsome leper, and yet he would be proud. What an admirable picture of the natural, or unrenewed man! How exact to the very life! The sinner is a leper; he knows that the leprosy of sin is upon him; that it has spread over his whole moral system; that it is working disease and death within him, and if not removed, will cut him off from heaven, and ruin him for ever. In these circumstances, he asks with more or less anxiety, what he must do to be saved? and when told, "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved"—O these terms are too hard and unreasonable! They are too simple—too humbling. They do not suit his proud and lofty soul; and he turns away in a rage. Yes, the heart of the sinner rises up against this way of salvation. Sometimes there is a positive enmity awakened, and the sinner would almost rather not be saved at all, than to be saved in a manner so galling to his proud and carnal heart. If salvation were put up at auction, he would bid high for it;

but to be saved in the way pointed out in the gospel—this does not suit his taste—does not fall in with the feelings of his unsanctified heart! He objects to this plan; he turns away from it, and would choose rather to be saved in some other way; and when told, that "other foundation can no man lay, than is laid, which is Jesus Christ," he does not like it; and when it is pressed upon him, like Naaman, he turns away, and is ready to say: "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" In other words, May I not be saved in my own way?

It may here be proper to inquire why the sinner is not pleased with the plan proposed in the gospel. One might suppose that the sinner, feeling himself to be a sinner, and knowing himself to be exposed to the wrath and curse of God, would be willing to be saved in any way. But no, we find it a universal fact, that the sinner tries his own plans first, and never will fall in with Heaven's plan, until he finds that, absolutely, he must, or he must perish for ever. The fact is well known; the reasons may be these:

First: The plan of salvation proposed in the gospel strips the sinner of his self-righteousness. All unconverted persons, but especially those who have been more moral and genteel,

those who have moved in respectable circles, and who have been classed with the benevolent and honourable ones of the day, are apt to imagine that they have something to recommend them, even in the sight of God their Maker. They are sinners, no doubt, but not great sinners. "Why! what harm have I done? I have injured no man; I have defrauded no man; I am no liar, no drunkard, no gambler; I never swear, except when I am angry; I pay all my just debts; I have a respect for good ministers, and go to hear them, and, according to my means, I contribute to their support. Moreover, I am a member of the Bible Society, and give to many benevolent institutions; and now, pray, what lack I yet?" The sum of the matter is this: the sinner begins with the confession that he is a sinner, and winds up with the belief that he is a pretty good man, and that his good deeds entitle him, at least, to some consideration. But the gospel comes, and addresses him, not as a pretty good man, but as a sinner, a great sinner, a lost and ruined sinner. The gospel tells him that his heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; that his whole life has been a life of departure from God; that his best actions have been mixed with sin; and that, in the sight of his Maker, all his righteousnesses are as filthy rags; that the

prayer of the publican suits him as truly as any other, and that if he ever is saved, it must be purely by grace, and in Christ alone. Now this does not fall in with his self-righteous feelings. He wishes some respect shown to him, on account of his being rather better than some others; and is not willing to be placed on the same platform with the vilest of sinners, and like them, be saved entirely on the score of free grace. This is too humbling to the pride of his heart; and when he is told that it is even so, that in the sight of God he also is a great sinner, a vile sinner, and if ever saved, "Christ must be all his hope, and grace all his song:" this doctrine does not suit him; and, when insisted upon, he is displeased, and is ready to say, What is the use of being so rigid and precise? May not a more genteel and fashionable religion answer just as well, and a little better too? "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turns away in a rage. Unhappy sinner! He would be unhappy because he would be self-righteous and proud. O how hard it is for the sinner to feel that he is a sinner, a guilty, hell-deserving sinner! How hard for him to realize that he lies low in the ruins of the fall! that in the sight of a pure and holy God he is vile, and if ever saved, it must be

by grace, and grace alone! This is so galling, so humbling to his proud and lofty soul. Pride is in his very nature. O this pride, this abominable pride! How it blocks up the way to heaven! How it bars up against him the gates of glory! Now, permit me to say, This pride must be brought down—as it is written, "The Lord resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." And again, "The loftiness of man shall be bowed down, and the haughtiness of men shall be laid low; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day."

Secondly: Another reason why the sinner does not, at first, like the plan proposed in the gospel is this: On account of the self-denial which it exacts.

> "Deny thyself and take thy cross,
> Is the Redeemer's great command."

Now, this is a hard saying. Who can hear it? The sinner, perhaps, is young, and in the midst of all the pleasurable scenes of life; and he is told, if he becomes a Christian he must deny himself; he must renounce the world, with all its pomps and vanities; he must come out from the world, withdraw from places of fashionable resort, give up all sinful pleasures; he must break away from his irreligious companions, no longer go with them in the flowery and devious paths of sin. The spirit of the

world he most not indulge in. He must repudiate its maxims, its manners, and every thing that is opposed to the genius of a religion that is holy, and heavenly, and divine. He must not suffer "the lust of the flesh, nor the lust of the eye, nor the pride of life," to have dominion over him any more. He must set his face and heart against sin of every kind, whether fashionable or unfashionable, whether profitable or unprofitable, whether pleasurable or not. He must be willing to take the yoke of Christ upon him, and maintain a holy singularity; aye, and "touch not, taste not, handle not" any thing that is offensive to God, or polluting to the soul. This is not pleasant to the sinner. He is willing to give up some sins, but not all—some worldly amusements, but not all. He does not like strict rules; he does not like religious restraints. He wishes to go along with the world, at least to a certain extent. He wishes to have some latitude in the matter of worldly pursuits and pleasures, and he does not like to be so bound up as not to be permitted, occasionally, to attend dancing parties in the evening, or pleasurable excursions on the Sabbath, or to resent injuries. He is much disposed to compromise matters; to enjoy religion and the world too. But the gospel is stern and uncompromising. The sinner must give up every sin; though dear

as a right eye, he must pluck it out; though dear as a right hand, he must cut it off. Yea, he must live denied to *all* ungodliness and worldly lusts, and live soberly, and righteously, and godly, in this present world. Now, thinks he, Is not this carrying matters a little too far? Is not this fanaticism? What is the use of being so strict and strait-laced? What is the use of being righteous overmuch? May not a more genteel and accommodating religion answer just as well? and even a little better? "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turns away in a rage. Unhappy sinner! He would be unhappy, because he does not wish to deny himself of all ungodliness and worldly lust. He does not wish, entirely, to let go his hold upon the world. There is some darling sin, some beloved lust or idol, which he wishes still to enjoy; and religion won't let him; hence the warfare and the battle in the sinner's soul!

A third reason why the sinner does not, at first, like the plan proposed in the gospel, is the spirituality which it requires. I never knew an unregenerate man spiritual in all my life. He may take much pleasure in forms and ceremonies, but for that which is truly spiritual, he has no relish. The homage of a

lip-service, and the compliment of a bended knee, he may be willing to offer to his Maker, but his heart is not in the matter. His spirit is not devout—never truly and deeply devout. He runs over the surface of things, and greatly prefers the form to the power of godliness. He takes no pleasure in drawing near to God, nor is he much inclined to pray in secret, nor to worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth. He has no objection, it may be, to converse about religion in general, and is willing to hear what he calls a good sermon, but he is not remarkably fond of plain, pungent, and practical preaching. If the minister has an agreeable person and a fine voice; if he is graceful in his gestures and has a brilliant imagination; if he can deal in flowers of rhetoric, or spread an intellectual treat before his hearers, he can listen to him, it may be, for one full hour. But let the man of God wax warm; let him lay aside his beautiful things and come down to the law and to the testimony; let him speak about the claims of the law, its extent and spirituality; let him thunder out its anathemas against the sinner; let him repeat what is written—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them;" let him press the necessity of repentance and faith, and reiterate the language of the Saviour, "Except

a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God"—then the sinner's attention begins to flag. He begins to be restless and uneasy; thinks the sermon too long; and secretly resolves that he will come to hear that man no more. "I don't like these preachers these days," said a certain man who had been listening to an awakening preacher during a season of revival: "I don't like these preachers these days, they make one feel so bad." Here the secret is revealed. Whilst the minister was dealing in beautiful things, and general things, the sinner's conscience was not disturbed; but when the claims of the law were presented, and the sinner's guilt and danger were made to start up before his mind, his carnal security was interrupted. He began to see that he was not quite so good as he had imagined himself to be. There was a sinking at his heart, an unwelcome peradventure, that, notwithstanding all his fond and cherished hopes, his state might not be so safe after all. No, no! he does not wish religion to have full dominion over him. It will interfere with some of his pursuits and schemes, and he is much disposed to say, "Go thy way for this time; when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." The sinner will, perhaps, read the Bible; but he has no particular relish for the psalms of David, nor Paul's epistles. He

greatly prefers the narrative and historical portions, and will speak in high terms of the Bible. "The Bible! the Bible!" he will say, "Why, sir, the Bible is the best book in the world! The doctrines, how sublime! The precepts, how perfect! The parables, how beautiful! There is the parable of the prodigal son, and the parable of the good Samaritan; why, sir, these are some of the finest specimens of moral painting ever presented to an admiring world! Sooner shall the seraph's voice lose its melody, than these parables cease to charm!" But now, should the person with whom he is conversing say, "It pleases me much, sir, to find that you think so highly of the sacred volume; but, as that book lays great stress upon the doctrine of the new birth, or regeneration, will you permit me to ask you one question? Do you really think, sir, that you have experienced this spiritual change, without which no one can enter heaven?" "I would be glad," replies he, "to know what you think about infants. Do you think all infants will be saved?" Let the pious friend rejoin, "Sir, I believe that those who die in infancy are saved; but I was not talking about infants. I was, with all respect, inquiring about your hopes for eternity. I greatly desire your salvation; I wish you to dig deep, and lay a good foundation for eternity; will you,

therefore, permit me to press the question, Do you really think that you are a converted man?" "Can you tell me, sir," says he, "who was Melchizedek? Without father, without mother, without beginning of days or end of years! Why, who can this be?"

My brethren, I suppose you understand this matter; the case is drawn from real life. The sinner is willing to talk on the subject of religion in a certain way, but he wishes not to have any thing of a spiritual nature pressed upon him; nothing that will trouble his conscience, or lead to any great searchings of heart. The fact is, as yet, he is not a spiritual man, and therefore does not like spiritual things. He has no objection to the forms of godliness, but the power of it he understands not. When, therefore, he is told that he must worship God, who is a Spirit, in spirit and in truth; that he must pray in secret; that he must remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy; that he must live by faith, and walk by faith, and that he must see to it, that his heart is right in the sight of God: in a word, when spiritual duties and exercises are insisted upon, and he is told that he must continually strive to have the Spirit of him who said, "Truly, our fellowship is with the Father, and with his Son, Jesus Christ"—these things, in his estimation, are hard requirements; they are

distasteful to him; they are deemed unnecessary and puritanical; and when urged, he is much inclined to be offended, and, turning away in disgust, his spirit utters the language of Naaman—"Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" Thus the sinner is still unhappy, because opposed to the gospel plan. O! how he longs to be saved in his own way! but the Bible will not permit him, and hence the struggles in the sinner's bosom—the warfare and the battle in the sinner's soul.

A fourth and last reason which I shall mention, why the sinner does not, at first, relish the plan proposed in the gospel, is this: It requires him to accept the Saviour cordially, in all his offices. In the sacred volume, the blessed Redeemer is exhibited in a great variety of characters, but in none does he appear as he should in the eyes of the sinner. Is Jesus a *Prophet?* What occasion for such a teacher to instruct him? "The light of reason," and the sentiments of the learned, he thinks, will answer just as well. Is Jesus a *Priest?* What occasion has he for such a one to intercede and atone for him? Tears of repentance, and moral reformation, he thinks, are all-sufficient to secure his pardon. Is Jesus Christ a *King?* The proud sinner wants no king to rule in and

reign over him. His lips are his own—who is Lord over him! Is Jesus a *Physician?* To be sure, the sinner knows that there is a moral leprosy upon him, but he hopes the case is not so bad, after all. Why may not the "balsam of tears," and the "opiates of morality" effect a speedy cure? And, as for this Fountain opened in the house of David for sin and uncleanness, what occasion is there for that? "Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? May I not wash in them and be clean?" So he turns away in a rage. How exact are the points of resemblance between Naaman and the awakened sinner! Surely this fragment of history was recorded, to present, with liveliness, in a figure, the case of the awakened sinner, in every place, and in every age! One point of resemblance more, and I have done.

V. *Both are shut up to the remedy proposed; it is that, or death!*—This is a most important point of resemblance, and one which must never be forgotten. Both are shut up to the remedy proposed; it is that, or death! When Naaman, not pleased with the terms stated, turned away, observe, the prophet did not call him back; the prophet proposed no compromise. Dip in Jordan seven times, and thou shalt be cleansed—refuse, and take the consequences. Even so, in the case of the sinner.

Let him, by faith, cordially accept of the Lord Jesus Christ, and he shall be saved;—reject him, and the sinner must perish! Positively, there is no other hope for him! for nothing can be more clear and settled than this declaration—"There is salvation in none else;" and this, "Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ." And, in substance, this solemn truth was announced by the Saviour himself, in his last charge to his disciples: "Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved, but he that believeth not, shall be damned." There has been no change, no compromise; there never will be! for the way of salvation, like the Saviour himself, is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. Hence the language of the apostle: "How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?" There is no escape! The sinner who rejects Christ, rejects the only Saviour, the only remedy. He cannot be saved by his own works of righteousness; he cannot be saved by the intercession of saints, nor purgatorial sufferings. Jesus Christ is the sinner's last and only hope, and if the sinner will not accept of Christ, he must perish! he must die eternally! he must be lost for ever! O that the sinner would believe this truth, this great Bible truth, and come to Christ before it is for ever too late!

When Naaman turned away from the house of the prophet—when he resolved to return to Syria, and brave the consequences, rather than submit to terms so galling to the pride of his heart—in these circumstances, it so happened that he had with him certain servants, who seem to have had a great respect for their master: they greatly desired that he might be cured; and to them the opportunity of obtaining a cure seemed a precious one, and the terms by no means hard, or unreasonable: "And they came near unto him, and spake unto him, and said, My father, if the prophet had bid thee do some great thing, wouldst thou not have done it? How much rather, when he saith unto thee, wash and be clean!" The argument was a good one; Naaman felt its force. He saw that he was a poor leper, and that pride was not made for him! He saw that his case was a desperate one. He could not cure himself;—no one in Syria could remove his leprosy. Here was an opportunity, and one only. Had he not better be a little humbled, than live and die a loathsome leper? Had he not better give up his lofty notions, and take the prophet on his own terms? Yes, the urgency of the case demands it; and the terms are not hard. Jordan is not far off, and how simple, how easy, to dip as the prophet directed! Reason has triumphed! the ser-

vants have prevailed! the proud conqueror, the haughty Naaman yields! "Then went he down, and dipped himself seven times in Jordan, according to the saying of the man of God, and his flesh came again unto him as the flesh of a little child, and he was clean!" Methinks I see him coming out of Jordan, cleansed of his leprosy—a new man! How his eyes sparkle! What joy beams in every feature of his countenance! He smiles! He can scarcely believe in the change wrought! It is too good to be true! Surely it must be some sweet dream! "Servants! is it true? Is your master's leprosy gone?"—"Yes, master, gone! It is just as the prophet has said. Your face is fair and beautiful; your flesh is as the flesh of a little child!"—"O blessed prophet! O faithful servants! O happy! happy me!" Methinks I hear the Syrian exclaim—"Yes, blessed prophet! faithful servants! and happy! happy! thrice happy me! What a blessed hour! what a blessed change is this to me! How I rejoice that my pride came down! How glad I am that I came to the house of the prophet, and, especially, that I at length yielded to his terms! This is the happiest hour of my life; more happy than when, on the field of battle, I proved a conqueror! more happy than when I was welcomed home, with greetings, and acclamations, by my royal master, and my grate-

ful countrymen! And now, when I return to Syria, and all shall see that my leprosy is cleansed, how with new joy they will greet me again! Will not my wife be made happy? Will not all my acquaintances be filled with wonder and delight? Yes, the voice of joy and gratulation will salute me on every hand! Surely, we shall have a blessed jubilee!"

Is there an awakened sinner here? Is there one in this large assembly who is sensible that a spiritual leprosy cleaves to him? Is he distressed by reason of his disease? Is he willing to go far and do much to obtain a cure? And yet, is he dissatisfied with Heaven's plan of saving the sinner? Is he in the indulgence of a proud and self-righteous spirit, endeavouring to work out his own salvation in his own way? Is he unwilling to humble himself at the foot of the cross? unwilling to be wholly indebted to Christ for salvation? If there be such a one present, I would act towards him as Naaman's servants did towards the Syrian leper. I would come near, I would reason, I would expostulate, I would entreat. My father! my mother! my friend! O my fellow sinner! if the prophet—if Jesus Christ had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? How much rather, when he says, Wash and be clean! If he had bid you traverse oceans and scale mountains; if he had bid you brave the

fury and storm of battle; if he had bid you bestow all your goods to feed the poor, and give your body to be burned—would you not have been willing to do all this, and even more, to secure your salvation? How much rather, then, when he says, "Come unto me, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest." "Look unto me and be saved all ye ends of the earth, for I am God, and beside me there is none else." O how simple is the way of salvation! "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The sinner cannot save himself. He is not required to do it. A Saviour is provided, an all-sufficient and most glorious Saviour—one who is able and willing to save unto the uttermost, all who will come unto God through him. This blessed Saviour, having made the great atoning sacrifice, can bestow pardon and life upon the very chief of sinners, the vilest of the vile. Only let the sinner come to Christ, in all the overflowings of a penitent and believing heart, his leprosy will be cleansed, his pardon will be sealed. Awakened sinner! this is the way! How simple! Stumble not at its simplicity. How reasonable! Then quarrel no longer with Heaven's plan. Again, I say, if the prophet—if Jesus Christ had bid you do some great thing, would you not have done it? how much rather when he says, "Wash and be

clean—believe and be saved." What hinders you? Is it a self-righteous spirit? Are you righteous in God's account? Remember, he is a thrice holy God, and cannot look upon sin with the least allowance. Are you righteous even in your own account? Has your conscience never troubled you? Do you not know, do you not feel that you are a sinner—that your sins are numerous, and highly aggravated? How do you propose to get rid of your sins? They cleave to you; no mortal power can remove them. Believe me, in the sight of a pure and holy God you would have no righteousness to boast of, even if you were as pure a man as Isaiah; for he confessed that all his righteousnesses were as filthy rags; and, on a certain occasion, he cried out, "Wo is me, for I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips, for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of Hosts!" But I ask again, what hinders the sinner from falling in with the gospel plan? He is proud—too proud to be saved by free grace—too proud to be indebted to Christ alone for salvation. Proud! and proud of what? Of a rebellious will? of a seared conscience? of a sinful life? of a hard heart? Proud! Of what? That he is a loathsome leper? a condemned sinner? an heir of wrath? and a child of the devil? Proud! Of what? Of

riches? Some of the vilest on earth are rich. Of beauty? Beauty! "The grave discredits thee. How are thy charms expunged! thy roses faded, and thy lilies soiled?" Proud! Of what? Of talents? "With the talents of an angel a man may be a fool." Proud! Of what? Of splendour and renown? Behold, the Lord of hosts doth take away the mighty man, and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the prudent and the ancient, the captain of fifty, and the honourable man, and the counsellor, and the cunning artificer, and the eloquent orator. Ah! my brethren! pride was never made for man. The sick chamber may teach him this, and so, emphatically, may death and the grave. A sinner proud! One whose soul is a mass of sin, and whose body must soon moulder in the tomb! He proud! How preposterous and absurd! I repeat it, pride was never made for poor sinful man. No! the dust is his place, and the prayer of the publican his appropriate prayer: "God be merciful to me a sinner." And now, haughty Naaman, let your pride come down. Turn your chariot, and go to Jordan. Yield, O yield to the terms of the prophet, and let your leprosy pass away! O sinner! sinner! be persuaded to fall in with the terms of the gospel! Yield your heart to Christ; you will never repent it. Did Naaman repent complying with

the terms of the prophet? No, he rejoiced with exceeding great joy—he rejoiced in it to his dying day! And so will you, and not to your dying day only, but to all eternity. I have seen sinners coming to Christ. I have seen them in the day of their conversion. O what a blessed moment! what a glorious change! The soul has new feelings; the heart has new joy! Every thing within is pleasant; every thing around is lovely. The sun shines more brightly, and the birds sing more sweetly. The flowers are more beautiful, and even the grass looks more green. Yes, it is even so. Sometimes the young convert feels as if he had entered into a new world—rejoices with joy unspeakable, and full of glory—yea, "Has a young heaven begun below, and glory in the bud." Tell me not that this is fanaticism! If it be, it is the fanaticism of the pentecostal converts, for we are told that "they did eat their meat with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God." It is the fanaticism of those who were converted in Samaria, for we are told that "there was great joy in that city." When the Philippian jailor was converted, according to the Scriptures he rejoiced in God with all his house. And what is said of the eunuch when he was brought under the influence of God's converting grace? "He, also, went on his way rejoicing." This is no

fanaticism. It is all perfectly reasonable and natural. Should a poor man suddenly become rich, or a sick man all at once find himself in strong health—should a person who was sleeping in a dungeon wake up in a palace, or he who was in a wilderness find himself in a garden—how sweet would be the surprise! how delightful the feelings! Even so it is with him who passes from a state of nature to a state of grace.

"When God revealed his gracious name,
And changed my mournful state;
My rapture seemed a pleasing dream,
The grace appeared so great!"

Well may there be joy, yea "rapture," in the soul, seeing that every thing in relation to the sinner has undergone so great and pleasing a change. The bond-slave of the devil has become the freedman of Christ, and the heir of wrath an heir of glory! O that many hearts may even now yield, and may this be the birth-day of many a precious soul!

When Naaman returned to Syria, cleansed of his leprosy, no doubt there were rejoicings there! How joyfully must his friends have greeted him, now returned safe and sound! and O how happy, especially, must have been his kindred, the members of his own family! Surely the voice of joy and gratulation was heard on every hand! Surely there must have

been a jubilee for many days! And now, should the awakened sinner come to Christ, what joy would this inspire in many bosoms! This would be an occasion long to be remembered. Yes, only let these anxious souls who are now weeping—only let them now come to Christ, and we shall have a jubilee here too! O how that pious father would rejoice in the conversion of his son! How that pious mother, who for years has been praying for her daughter—how she would press to her bosom with feelings of new delight that beloved daughter, once careless, now a Mary at the feet of her Redeemer! How would the pious wife rejoice over the conversion of her husband! and the pious husband over the conversion of his wife! How brothers and sisters would rush into each other's arms, and give glory to God, that now, at last, they were going to heaven hand in hand! I have beheld such scenes. They bring us near to heaven. O for the yielding of hearts! the breaking down of strongholds! God grant us a pentecostal time, a blessed jubilee now, even in this place, and at this time! O Lord, revive thy work! Let the people praise thee, let all this people praise thee! Amen, and Amen!

SERMON VI.

THE EXAMPLE OF ELI.

For I have told him, that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth: because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.—1 SAMUEL iii. 13.

THE case of Eli is melancholy, yet full of instruction; and, whilst there is a parent on earth, it will sound an alarm, which must, and will be heard. Eli was high-priest, and was, upon the whole, a good man; but in one thing he was much to be blamed—he neglected parental duty—"His sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not."

Bending now beneath the load of age, this good, but too indulgent parent, had retired from the active duties of the priesthood. These duties had devolved upon his two sons, Hophni and Phinehas; but, alas! they were "sons of Belial;" for, although ministering as priests, in the service of the Lord, they were openly immoral! Indeed, so shameful were the immoralities of the young men, that "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." Eli, it is true, was probably not an eye-witness of his sons' immoralities, but he was not ignorant of them; for, we are told, that he heard all that his sons did unto all Israel, but he restrained them not. To be sure, he did not pass over

the matter entirely, in silence. No, he reasoned, he expostulated, and even reproved them, saying, "Why do ye such things? for I hear of your evil doings, by all this people; nay, my sons, it is no good report that I hear of you. You make the Lord's people to transgress. If one man sin against another, the judge shall judge him; but if a man sin against the Lord, who shall entreat for him?" Thus, he reasoned, and expostulated, and gently reproved, but restrained them not. This was not enough. The sins of the young men were flagrant, and called for stronger measures. He ought to have rebuked them sharply. He ought to have exerted his authority, and put these sons of Belial out of the priesthood. But, no! his too indulgent spirit, his overweening fondness—perhaps I should rather say, his criminal weakness—caused him to neglect parental duty; and what was the consequence? Terrible, indeed! God's righteous anger is kindled, and it burns fiercely, against the household of this venerable, but unhappy old man. The first alarming intimations of divine wrath is made by a prophet, who, divinely commissioned, comes to Shiloh, and rings an awful peal in the ears of Eli, predicting heavy judgments, just at hand. Shortly after this, the Lord appeared to Samuel, by night, and said unto him: "Behold, I will do a thing in

Israel, at which both the ears of every one that heareth it shall tingle! In that day, I will perform against Eli all things which I have spoken concerning his house. When I begin, I will also make an end: for I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth: because his sone made themselves vile, and he restrained them not: therefore have I sworn unto the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever." These were not vain words. At this time, there was war between the Israelites and the Philistines. To animate and encourage the former, the ark of God was carried from Shiloh into their camp. Hophni and Phinehas, as officiating priests, went along with the ark. When the ark was brought into the camp of Israel, all Israel shouted with a great shout, so that the earth rang again! When the Philistines heard the noise of the shout, and understood the occasion thereof, they were terrified, and cried out, saying, "God is come into the camp! Woe unto us! Who shall deliver us out of the hands of these mighty gods? These are the gods which smote the Egyptians with all the plagues, in the wilderness." Nevertheless, they encouraged each other, saying, "Be strong, and quit yourselves like men, O ye Philistines, that ye be not ser-

vants to the Hebrews, as they have been to you. Quit yourselves like men, and fight!"

And now the contending forces rush to battle. The clash of arms is heard. The battle rages. The earth is red with blood! Eli, all anxiety, is seated at the gate of the city. From an elevated seat he looks towards the battle-field, watching, for his heart trembled for the ark of God. Suddenly a man of Benjamin is seen coming in haste, with his clothes rent, and dust upon his head! What is the matter? Ah! he brings dreadful tidings! "What is there done, my son?" exclaims Eli, all alarm and anxiety—"What is there done, my son?" And the messenger answered and said, "Israel is fled! There has been a great slaughter amongst the people! Thy two sons, Hophni and Phinehas, are dead! and the ark of God is taken!" O the poor old man! See! he sinks! he has swooned away! he has fallen!—"And when Eli heard that the ark of God was taken, he fell from off his seat, backward, by the side of the gate, and his neck brake, and he died, for he was an old man, and heavy." Methinks as he heard of the disasters of the day he exclaimed—God of heaven, this is thy righteous judgment! My sons made themselves vile, and I restrained them not, and they are cut off in the midst of their sins! My sons profaned the ark of God, and, wo upon wo! it also is

taken!—Ah! my brethren, this is more than the poor old man can bear! He swoons! he falls backward from his seat upon the ground. His neck breaks, and he dies! The wife of Phinehas, too, not far off, hears the dismal tidings. She gives a piercing shriek! Premature pangs come upon her; she groans in anguish; names her child *Ichabod*, (which means, the glory is departed,) and dies! O, day of disaster! O, scene of no common mourning! Only see!—on yonder field of battle lie two impious sons, weltering in their gore! Near the gate of the city, the old man, prostrate upon the ground, dead, and his silvery locks dishonoured in the dust! And, not far off, a daughter-in-law shrieks and expires! And now, over this scene of disaster and war, methinks the voice of an invisible one thrills through the air—"For I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth; because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not; therefore have I sworn to the house of Eli, that the iniquity of Eli's house shall not be purged with sacrifice nor offering for ever!"

There are parents in this assembly; it may be in many respects good parents, but perhaps some of them are Elis;—good parents, but they neglect parental duty. O what a serious matter this is! It is, alas! too common, and

who can tell the evils flowing from it, even from generation to generation! If there be any present who are walking in the footsteps of the too indulgent and unhappy Eli, I would desire, at this time, to address them with much plainness, and yet with great kindness and respect—remembering that I am also a parent, and perhaps need rebuke and counsel as well as they. I could wish myself better qualified to speak upon the subject than I am; yet it may not be amiss for me here simply to say, that however deficient I myself may have been in the matter of parental duty, yet I would say, to the praise of God's grace, that I have the prospect of meeting my whole family unbroken in heaven; and every child, save one, was hopefully converted in the morning of life.

Our text is rarely taken. Too seldom is the subject of parental duty, or family government, presented from the sacred desk; and this, perhaps, is one reason, that teachers of common schools, and officers in seminaries of learning of a higher character, so frequently have occasion to complain of "bad boys," and boys that are rude, and difficult to be controlled. I know that oftentimes there is a fault in the nursery, and that some mothers are not happy in the management of their children; permitting their children to rule them, when they should

rule their children. Perhaps the mother is deficient in the matter of sound judgment; or may not be uniform; or perhaps she cannot control herself, and therefore cannot control those committed to her charge. But there are cases of this kind:—the mother does every thing which a wise and prudent mother ought to do, in the training of her children; but her boys are getting rather beyond her control, she needs help from the other parent, and this help is not afforded. Fathers! listen! I have heard many complaints of this kind. O, ye who are emphatically heads of your families—kings in your own household—remember! very much depends upon you. Some fathers are disposed to excuse themselves. Their business, they think, is "to make money," and provide for their families; and, as the Shunamite father, when he was with his reapers in the field, and his little boy came to him sick and cried, My head! my head! only replied, Carry him to his mother—for he was too busy to attend to such matters—even so, at the present day, too many fathers neglect their children, turning them over to the care of the mother. Thus did not Abraham, for, what said the Almighty concerning him? "I know him, that he will command his children, and his household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord." The general subject of family

government, is, however, not at this time to be presented. There is, now, only one branch of parental duty to which I would particularly call your attention, and that is, the duty of restraining children from the indulgence of things which are vicious and vile.

I. Parents should restrain their children from indulging in evil passions. Certain strong feelings of the soul may be highly useful. If, in their exercise, they are confined to proper limits, they give promptness and energy to the character; but they must be properly controlled. They are like fire, "good servants, but bad masters," and require early attention, and all proper restraints. If neglected by the parent, they are apt to grow with the growth, and strengthen with the strength of the child; and, too frequently, they are permitted to get the mastery, even in early life. How often have I seen petted and spoiled children, raging with angry passions, and even treating with indignity those who gave them birth. If ever parental authority should be exercised, if ever the rod of correction should be used, this is the time; for the indulgence of violent passions has proved the ruin of many. O how many hands have been stained with blood! and how many families have been clothed in mourning! and how many poor souls have been sent unprepared to their last account, by the indulgence

of evil passions, which ought to have been controlled, but were not, in the nursery!

I saw a boy once, not twelve years of age, in a prison, who, in a fit of passion, had murdered one of his companions! And I saw another, not ten years old, who, in a paroxysm of rage, had hung himself! Moreover, I can mention an incident that occurred some years ago, which strongly illustrates the evil of not controlling children in early life.

An elder of my church, (a most lovely and venerable man, but an Eli, if there ever was one in modern times,) had a son, who, when about twenty years of age, being angry with his father one evening, seized his venerable parent by the hair of his head, and endeavoured to throw him out of the window of a two story house. And now, mark! what did this young man the next morning, when the violence of his passions had subsided? Did he fall upon his knees and beg his father's forgiveness? No! he added insult to injury. When his father reminded him of his outrageous conduct, he replied, "Sir, it is your own fault! you ought to have restrained me when I was a child."

Parents! think upon these things, and when you see your children excited, calm them. When you see their passions kindling, hold them in check. Do not even suffer them,

when excited, to speak loudly, for it is common for persons to become more excited by hearing their own voice; as the lion is said to lash himself into a fury by the rapid movement of his own tail. And above all, beware how, by precept or example, you teach your children lessons of revenge. I have known a mother to strike a chair, against which her child had fallen and hurt itself; and who, affecting passion, said, "Naughty thing! Strike it, my dear! Mother will not let it hurt her darling!" And there are fathers who will not only suffer themselves to be thrown into a passion in the presence of their children, but will, positively, teach them with violence to resent all injuries. "My son," said a certain parent, "you are going to school; if a boy strikes you, and you do not return the blow, I will correct you." How much better would be this counsel and this language: "My son, you are going to school. Be respectful and kind to all your playmates, and they will be respectful and kind to you; for the Bible says, 'With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.'" Parents would do well to require their children to commit to memory this passage of Scripture: "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit than he that taketh a city:"—and nothing better than frequently to repeat, in their

hearing, what is said of the blessed Saviour: "When he was reviled, he reviled not again. When he suffered, he threatened not." And, also, that even when upon the cross, he prayed for his murderers, saying, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." But, parents, if after all good counsel, and this enforced by a good example, you find your children will indulge in vindictive and angry passions, you know your duty—restrain them! But,

II. Parents should restrain their children from uttering falsehood, or, in plainer language, from telling lies. No vice is more sinful or degrading; none marks a more depraved heart than this. And yet, some children seem to be strangely addicted to it, even in early childhood. Indeed, the Bible says, "The wicked are estranged from the womb; they go astray as soon as they are born, speaking lies." Vile and abominable as this vice is, there are some parents who do not frown upon it as they should. Nay, some even encourage it! not intentionally, it may be, and yet they do encourage it, and that in several ways; permit me to mention a few. The child has told a story, a downright falsehood, and the parent smiles. And why? There was something amusing in it, or something smart; and the parent is evidently more pleased with the wit than displeased with

the sin. This is not all. The story is told to the next person who steps in, and he must needs smile, and say something complimentary of the "little rogue," as he is playfully termed, or not please the doating parent. Another case:—To induce the child to take some nauseous medicine, the parent tells the child it is sugar; the child takes the dose, and finds that a fraud was practised. Again:—To induce the child to remain quietly at home, when the parents go to town, a promise is made that such a thing will be done, or such a present made; and the promise is broken. Take another case:—A certain neighbour is present, and the parents profess wonderful friendship, are marvellously cordial; but, as soon as he has retired, and the door is closed, they turn him into ridicule, or speak of him with great contempt; and this in the presence of the child. Take another example:—The child, through heedlessness, breaks a plate, and the parent, happening at that moment to be in a bad humour, slaps the child. The next day the child is detected in telling a downright lie, and the parent is contented with giving the child a gentle rebuke. What impression does this make? Why, certainly this—It is more sinful to break a plate than to tell a lie! Sometimes, also, parents, for the sake of amusement, or to excite wonder, will most grossly discolour nar-

ratives, and exaggerate matters of fact; and will, perhaps, even give fiction for truth. Ah! little do such parents think what evil they are doing to their offspring! Little do they think how they are sowing and watering the seeds of sin!—how they are nourishing a germ which has within it poison and death! Parents should teach their children how odious and sinful all lying is: how offensive to God, and how certainly it will bring ruin upon the soul. It would be well to remind children frequently of what the Bible says: "The mouth of him that speaketh lies shall be stopped:" and again—"All liars shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone." "Mr. Baker," said a little boy to me in a certain place, "I can't tell a lie." I had just been addressing children, and among other things, I had mentioned that a good little boy was a father's jewel, and a bad little boy was a father's plague. On coming out, I laid my hand upon the head of a sprightly, rosy-cheeked boy, of five years of age, and said, "My little friend, are you your father's jewel?" "Mr. Baker," said he, "I can't tell a lie. I am my father's jewel." His father was a worthy elder of the church, and had no doubt taught him the exceeding sinfulness of lying, and that truth, like the name of the ever blessed God, is most sacred, and must in no

form or fashion be trifled with. Parents, attend to this matter! If your children are acquiring the habit of lying, remember, they are making themselves vile. Forget not your responsibility—restrain them!

III. Parents should restrain their children from profane swearing. There is something, however, so unnatural, and impious, and daring, in this vice, that children are not so apt to fall into it, as into some others; and yet there are boys, and even little boys, whose mouths are full of cursing and bitterness! Young and tender, as they are, their unhallowed lips blaspheme their Maker, and pour out curses on all around. I have heard little children swearing in the streets; and I once knew a boy, not four years of age, who would swear most profanely, and curse his mother! His grandfather had taught him to do it—all in sport, it is true, but no less sinful on that account. And, sad to tell, that same little boy was laid in his grave only a few months after! And, not long since, riding in the stage with a very profane young man, "Sir," said he to me, "my father used to tell me to curse the horses when they would not do as I wished them." That any bearing the sacred name of parents should, by precept, teach their offspring the language of profaneness, is almost incredible; and yet such there are. Surely, parents of

this kind are monsters in human shape, and must be considered as standing forth, fair candidates for companionship with those foul spirits in the world of woe, who blaspheme the God of heaven, because of their pains, and repent not. We do hope that the number of this frightful stamp of character is small; but we fear that there are, alas! too many, who, if they do not teach profaneness by precept, do it by practice, and this is nearly the same; for what is example, but a living or illustrated precept? O, venerated father! If you must swear, be entreated, don't do it in the presence of your dear little boy! He thinks that you are the best man upon the face of the earth; he thinks that whatever you do must be right. And shall his very respect for you be the occasion of his ruin? If you are about uttering an oath, if your boy be present, for the sake of that dear boy, if for no other reason, let that oath die unuttered upon your tongue. But there are some parents who will not teach their children to swear, either by precept or example, and who would by no means tolerate their swearing in their presence, who, nevertheless, care very little what language their children use when not in their presence, and who, even if told that their children are profane, take no notice of the matter. Such parents are not innocent. They stand guilty

before God. Eli was, probably, not an eye-witness of his sons' immoralities; but he was not ignorant of them; for, as we are informed, "he was told of all that his sons did, but he restrained them not;" and hence the curse came. And, as we have seen, most terrible was the curse. Let all parents take warning!

Profane swearing is, I am sorry to say it, a vice but too common in our land, and in our day. Go into any tavern or hotel; travel in any stage, steamboat, or railroad-car, and if you do not hear the language of profaneness, you are more favoured than I have been. It is common, I believe, every where. In the city, in the country; on the land, and on the wave. And what is surprising, it is not confined to the lowest orders of society, but it is common even amongst those who are esteemed respectable and genteel. And, what is still more remarkable, even persons of literary taste are sometimes found profane. They will use phrases which have no beauty, and which no grammarian on earth can parse; and these abominable phrases they will repeat more than one hundred times in a day! If this be not the bubbling up of sheer depravity, what is it? And, strange to say, some persons who hold to the doctrine of universal salvation, nevertheless, will say, over and over again, that they will be damned, and will even

swear to it! This sin, my brethren, of profane swearing, I consider peculiarly impious and daring; for it is so expressly forbidden; and, of all others, it has the least excuse, for it has no reward—no temptation. Does it add to a man's wealth? It does not. Does it make him more happy? It does not. Does it make him more influential or beloved? It does not. Does it, in any manner, raise him in the estimation of others? It does not. In the view of the wisest and the best, it lowers him; it makes him vile; for it is well known that the most unprincipled and abandoned, the vilest of the vile, are usually the most profane. Who ever heard of a pirate that did not swear? of a liar that did not swear? of a gambler that did not swear? Now, if the most wicked and most vile are, of all others, the most profane, certainly, just so far as a man resembles them, he makes himself vile. Parents, remember this! Can you be indifferent to a matter of this kind? Religion apart, if you have a regard for your own standing, or the respectability of your children, do not lose sight of this matter. If your children are becoming profane, they are becoming wicked and vile. Ah me! when a child swears, methinks all heaven grieves! God Almighty frowns! guardian angels blush! and the Recording Spirit sighs as he writes it down in the records of eternity!

What, then, must parents do in such a case? Do you ask? The case is clear: let them assert their authority; let them restrain those committed to their charge.

IV. Parents should, moreover, restrain their children from keeping bad company. The Bible says, and says correctly, "Evil communications corrupt good manners:" and a certain old writer makes this remark, quaint, but true: "They who go much into bad company, are like those who go much into the sun—they soon get tanned." Firm indeed must be that heart which can withstand continual temptations; and strong those principles which can resist perpetual assaults—"attrition wears the solid rock." Even men, ripe in age and experience, have been seriously injured by too intimately associating with improper characters; and what then can be expected from an inexperienced youth, or a tender child? Solomon knew well the danger of such associations, and therefore said, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not: walk not thou in the way with them; refrain thy feet from their path." That is, have nothing to do with them. It is better for a son or daughter to have no companions at all, than those who are vile and corrupting. Many an interesting young man, who once bid fair to be a comfort to his parents, and a useful and ornamental member of socie-

ty, has been ruined by vile associates, and bad companions. Am I wrong? Perhaps some, even now present, are ready to say, "Sir, I had well nigh been ruined in this way. My feet were almost gone; my steps had well nigh slipped! O, if it had not been for that sudden death, or that alarming providence, or that sore affliction, or that pious letter, or that awakening sermon, or that faithful friend, I would have been ruined by my evil associates! Blessed be God, who has not given over my soul as a prey to destruction! My soul is delivered as a bird out of the snare of the fowler; the snare is broken, and I am escaped!" Parents, think well upon this subject! Guard the morals of your children; select their companions; see to it, that these companions be the gentle and the good, and not the vicious and the vile. If they prefer the latter, talk kindly to them, reason the matter well; but, if they persist, remember the case of Eli, and restrain them!

V. Parents should restrain their children from the sin of Sabbath-breaking. The fourth commandment, which says, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy," is one of the most important in the whole decalogue; and I fully accord with the sentiment expressed in these words, "No Sabbath, no religion." The Sabbath, like the rite of marriage, was an institu-

tion of paradise. And most truly did our Saviour say, "The Sabbath was made for man"—designed to be a blessing to the human race—a benefit to man's physical and moral nature, as well as a blessing to him in a spiritual point of view. Relax the obligations of the Sabbath, and you open the floodgates of vice; abolish the Sabbath, and you ruin the world! See France, when the Sabbath was abolished!—then began "the reign of terror." Sir Matthew Hale states, that nearly all of those upon whom he was called to pass sentence of death, confessed that their course of depravity and crime commenced in breaking the holy Sabbath! and of twelve hundred and thirty-two convicts in the State prison of New York, it seems, that only twenty-six had been taught to reverence that sacred day! These things speak volumes. Parents! teach your children, both by precept and example, to remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Permit them not to wander about, as little Arabs, on that holy day; permit them not to engage in their usual sports and pastimes; send them to the Sabbath-school; place in their hands interesting books suited to the day; teach them their catechisms; tell them "Bible stories;" talk to them about Joseph, about Samuel, about Daniel, and the three children; talk

to them about the blessed Saviour, and the martyrs; about heaven, and certain good children who have gone to that happy world; furnish yourself with matter; lay yourself out to give Sabbath day instruction; let every thing be pleasant and inviting; let the Lord's day, so to speak, be wreathed with flowers; let it be made to your children a delight, the "sweetest of all the seven." If, however, your children are disposed to wander about on the Sabbath, and get into improper company, and engage in improper sports, remember the case of Abraham, who maintained his authority, and the case of Eli, who did not; remember the blessing which came upon the one, and the curse which came upon the other, and neglect not parental duty!

I might also say something on the subject of frequenting taverns, using ardent spirits, attending horse-races, and theatres, and dancing parties; and also about novel-reading, and many other things, but the time would fail. Permit me to say, that parents should, as far as possible, restrain their children from every thing calculated to have a corrupting or evil influence upon them, in any way; for, is not the parent the Heaven-appointed guardian of the child? and if the parent does not watch over the morals of the child, who will? But this suggests the propriety of adding a few

remarks, by way of stirring up parents to a more faithful and diligent discharge of the important duties which devolve upon them.

1. Parents, remember, your children are jewels—living jewels! They bear the stamp of immortality. They will outlive the splendours of the sun, and all the stars which decorate the broad arch of heaven! They must live for ever; and that either in happiness or in misery—either as angels of light, or spirits damned! and to you, more than to any other persons in the world, is committed the power and the duty of forming the character of the child. And hence, to the parent it is said, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." You are the pilot that must direct the course; you are the guide that must mark out the right path. Early impressions, we all know, are the most enduring; and, in the providence of God, it is so arranged, that whether you desire it or not, the earliest impressions are received from you. O the immense responsibility of the parent! It is enough to make the best man tremble!—at any rate, it is enough to drive every parent to the throne of the heavenly grace, to seek wisdom there. And O how unhappy, how pitiable is the case of those children whose parents, so far from restraining them from wicked ways, do not

restrain themselves! It is the duty of all parents to "allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way." But when the influence of the parent is the reverse of this, surely it is enough to make angels weep. Many children who were blessed with good and pious parents, will, we verily believe, rise up and call their parents blessed, in the resurrection morn. O ye parents, who neglect parental duty, what will your children say of you in the great judgment-day? But this leads to another remark.

2. Parents! are you aware of your responsibility? Have you ever seriously thought how much depends upon you? Have you discharged your duty to your children? Have you done your best to form their manners, and to give their characters a noble and heavenly stamp? Have you done what you could to make them virtuous in life, happy in death, and happy for ever? If your son is profligate, have you nothing to reproach yourself with? Suppose you were now upon a dying bed, would you have the consolation of believing that you had done every thing you could do to promote the best interests of your children for time and for eternity? Eli's sons were cut down in the midst of their sins; and you know how melancholy was his own end. Should your children, or any one of them, be

taken away unprepared, would there be no remorse waked up in your bosom? Are you quite sure that there would be no occasion for any thing like self-reproach? In a meeting for serious inquirers, held in a certain place, there was one under most pungent conviction. He was overwhelmed; he was almost convulsed with agony! He was a father, who had just come from the grave of his son, a young man, who had died, it seems, without hope. The unhappy old man then remembered his fault, his dreadful guilt, in neglecting parental duty. He had neither by precept nor example been a blessing to his son—and now that son was gone for ever! O ye parents, who have not been faithful to your trust, could you have seen this unhappy father weeping bitterly over his neglect of parental duty, methinks it would have had the power of a thousand arguments to rouse you to the importance of attending, with all diligence and fidelity, to those immortal ones whom Heaven has committed to your charge!

3. One remark more, and I have done. Parents, your own happiness is concerned in this matter! "A wise son," says Solomon, "maketh a glad father; but a foolish son is the heaviness of his mother." It is a remarkble fact, that children who are properly controlled in early life, retain a respect and affec-

tion for their parents as long as they live; but those who have been foolishly indulged, and permitted in every thing to have their own way; those, in other words, whose training has been neglected, and who have not in early life been brought under proper control; those, I have noticed, are wont to be very deficient both in respect and affection. I have seen cases of this kind, so marked, that it seemed as if the judgments of heaven had commenced falling upon unfaithful parents, even in this life; and the words of our text seemed to tingle upon the ear: "I have told him that I will judge his house for ever, for the iniquity which he knoweth, because his sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not." Parents, do your duty in the fear of God, and your children will be a comfort to you. O how happy the parent whose children turn out well! The mother's heart thrills with joy whilst, like the mother of the Gracchii, she pronounces them her jewels; and the fond father, too, with a glad heart, delights to call them his, whilst he realizes the blessedness of that man, whose "wife is as a fruitful vine by the side of his house, and his children like olive plants round about his table." God bless every parent here! and may none have the weakness, nor share the sorrows of the unhappy Eli!

SERMON VII.

PROVE YOUR OWN WORK.

But let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another.—GALATIANS vi. 4.

IN these words we have an important precept, enforced by a very powerful consideration. The precept is expressed in these words: "Let every man prove his own work." By a man's own work, we are to understand, not merely his actions, and general conduct, but his thoughts, his motives, his sentiments, and every thing, indeed, which has an influence on the forming of his moral and religious character. These things he is to prove: that is, to test; to see if they are of the right stamp; to see if they will answer in a dying hour; to see if they will stand the scrutiny of the last great day.

At first view, we see that the precept is an important one. But this is not enough. It is exceedingly important. To prove this, permit me to remark—First: Self-deception is very common, and this arises from several sources. In the first place, the springs of action lie very deep. A man may suppose himself to be influenced by one set of motives, when, really, he is influenced by another set of motives, altogether! This rich

man, for example, gives himself great credit for his numerous and splendid charities. He really thinks they flow from motives of pure benevolence, when, perchance, if traced to their source, it will be found that these acts of charity originate in secret vanity, or a love of human applause. See that youthful soldier! At the call of his country, he buckles on his armour, faces the wintry blast, and rushes through clouds of dust, and seas of blood! He firmly believes that he is a patriot, when, really, true patriotism, it may be, has very little to do in this matter. Ambition is the ruling passion in his bosom! He pants for distinction! He longs to twine the laurels of fame around his brow! "Come and see my zeal for the Lord of Hosts," said Jehu, when he was cutting down the enemies of the Lord. What made him so zealous on this occasion? It so happened, that in cutting down the enemies of the Lord, he was establishing his own dynasty! Ah! my brethren, the heart is deceitful above all things; and the springs of action lie very deep. This is one great source of self-deception. Another is this—the power of self-love. Charity, or love, the Scriptures tell us, covereth a multitude of sins: that is, hides them from the view. See that over-fond and doating mother!—(Mistake me not—if there is a class of persons upon earth for whom

I have a peculiarly profound respect, it is for mothers; and I can with all my heart say, Heaven bless mothers, all the world over! but I have reference now to a certain description of mothers, concerning whom it may be said, alas! that there are such!)—See that doating mother, I say—she has one only child—one darling boy. She thinks that he is the perfection of all excellence—the best child in all the land—and she is telling its smart sayings, and speaking its praises to every neighbour that steps in. She thinks, she really believes this child to be the best in all the land. Every body else sees plainly that it is a spoiled piece!—Why? It will disobey its mother; it is peevish, and fretful; is rude even in the presence of company. It is positively a bad child; and yet the mother thinks that it is wonderfully smart and good—none like it in all the town! How are we to account for this? Charity covers a multitude of sins. The mother's overweening fondness for her child hides from her view all its faults, and therefore she comes to a wrong conclusion concerning the true chraacter of that child. Just so in the case before us. Loving ourselves, as we are too apt to do, with an inordinate love, we are wont to look more frequently upon the bright, than the dark side of our character. This being the case, what are we to expect, but that we shall

think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think? The power of self-love! Yes, this has deceived many.

There are other sources of self-deception; but I proceed to make a second remark, which is this:—Self-deception is very dangerous. It serves to keep a person quiet, when, if he were only aware of his true character and condition, he would be in a state of great alarm and anxiety. If I have taken up the idea that I am no sinner, what motive have I to repent? If I have come to the conclusion that I am on the safe side, why should I desire to change sides? If I lay to my soul the flattering unction that I have a very good heart, why should I pray that God would give me a new heart? Thus, we see the evil and danger of self-deception; keeping us quiet at the very moment when, perhaps, we have reason to cry out, with the Philippian jailor, "O sirs! what must I do to be saved?" But this is not all. Self-deception leads to the ruin of many. What says the Saviour?—Many shall come unto me in that day, and say, Lord! Lord! and I will profess unto them—Depart! I never knew you! Who are these? Miserable self-deceivers, who, neglecting to prove their own work, knew nothing of their true condition until the light of eternity broke the power of all delusion! O, how awful, for a person to go down to the grave

with "a lie in his right hand!" and what time he smiles of angels, and the plaudits of the blessed Redeemer, to hear the thunders of wrath, and the wailings of the lost! And yet we have too much reason to fear that this will be the case with many. I think I can mention the case of one, at least, who evidently left the world under the power of self-deception—Jean Jacques Rousseau. When near his end, he had no anxiety in relation to his future state, but turning to one, (I think not his wife,) remarked: "My dear, how happy for one to die who has nothing to reproach himself with! I will go to the bar, and say, 'Great God, here is Jean Jacques Rousseau! and a better man never lived!'"—Now, did not this very man write two octavo volumes, (his own life,) in which he confesses that he did many things most shameful, and which I would not mention, lest the very mention thereof should crimson the cheek of modesty? Yet, forgetting all these things, he bases all his hopes of heaven upon the purity of his moral character! Most assuredly he was a miserable self-deceiver! He had not proved his own work, and, so far as we can see, it proved the ruin of his soul. But I can mention another case, more startling still. I knew a female who died shouting; and yet there was awful reason to fear that she never entered the heavenly world. I will state the

case, and you can form your own conclusion. She had neglected the care of her soul, it seems, all her life long; when near her end, mark! without any conviction of sin, (so far as I could perceive) or need of a Saviour, she got her imagination wrought upon about "the golden streets of the new Jerusalem;" and whilst this brilliant image was before her mind she was thrown into a rapture, and left the world in what was called great triumph! Surely this must have been a case of self-deception; for how can a person be a penitent without having some conviction of sin? or how can a person embrace a Saviour without feeling any need of him? Ah! surely, it was Apollyon, coming up out of the smoke of Tophet, and saying, Peace! peace! when there is no peace. Hush! hush! when death and destruction are just at the door! "No marvel," says Peter, "for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light." O, how important, when such mighty interests are at stake, to dig deep, and lay a good foundation! In other words, how important, how exceedingly important it is for every man to prove his own work!

There is no such thing as rectifying mistakes in eternity. When death's leaden sceptre is laid upon the cold bosom, the decree of an immutable God rolls over the shrouded form—"He that is filthy, let him be filthy still! and

he that is righteous, let him be righteous still!" In view of these things I now ask, Is not the precept in our text one of exceeding great importance? If I mistake not, the best in this assembly are ready promptly to exclaim, "It is! It is!"—for I have noticed that those whose piety is the least questionable, are the very ones who are most disposed to exercise a godly jealousy over their own hearts; knowing that, of a truth, the human heart by nature "is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." But, deceitful as the heart of man unquestionably is, there is nevertheless, such a thing as knowing our true state and condition. Yes, there is such a thing as being able to say with the man of Uz, "I know that my Redeemer liveth"—and with the apostle Paul, "We know, that if the earthly house of this our tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens." Certainly, every man may prove his own work—may test his own character, or we should not find recorded the precept in our text. Aye, and I will go further, and say, if we are truly converted, we must have scriptural evidence of it, and that too—mark! whether we have lights, or shadows—joy or sorrow! Do you doubt this? See that dear little girl! she loves her mother; she follows her mother, as if she were her

shadow. She cannot be happy when her mother is gone. See her now, almost dancing for joy, whilst standing near her mother's lap. How her eyes sparkle! Her face is dressed in smiles! "What makes you so happy, little child?" "O," says she, "Mother loves me; she talks so good to me!"—You don't question her love for her mother. Change the case: That little daughter has done something to displease its mother. Its mother is displeased, and looks sad. "Ma, what is the matter?" says the child. "Why, my daughter," replies the mother, "you have been a naughty child, and your mother can't love you until you are sorry for what you have done." See the little creature! she bursts into a flood of tears, and rushing into another room, she cries, fit to break her little heart! Some one comes by and says, "Are you sick?" She is not disposed to talk. Another asks, "What is the matter, my little dear? What makes you cry so?" "O!" exclaims she, "Mother don't love me! Mother don't love me!"—Now, I ask, does not this child give as convincing proof of real affection for her mother, as when she was dancing around her mother's lap, because her mother was smiling upon her? As this child, then, has a way of making known her affection for her mother, whether her mother smile or frown, even so, piety has a way of making it-

self known, whether there be lights or shadows, joy or sorrow. Take the case of Job, for example. On one occasion the candle of the Lord shines upon him, and in the joy and exultation of his soul he exclaims, "I know that my Redeemer liveth!" At another time he is under a cloud; and what is his language now? "O, that I knew where I might find him!—Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Is not his piety just as evident in the latter as in the former case?

Take another example:—The Psalmist, in a moment when every thing is bright and clear, uses this language of confidence and triumph: "Thou shalt guide me with thy counsels, and afterwards receive me to glory." You have no doubt of his piety now. But a cloud has passed over the Psalmist; he is in great darkness;—mark his language now! "Will the Lord cast off for ever? will he be favourable no more?—Why art thou cast down, O my soul? and why art thou disquieted within me? Hope in God, for I shall yet praise him." Surely nothing can be more evidential of true piety than this. These things being so, I take this position, that if a person is truly converted—truly a child of God, he must and will have scriptural evidence of it, whether he have lights or shadows, whether he have joy or sorrow. Hence, the precept in our text is appli-

cable to all, and in all circumstances—"Let every man prove his own work." And now, my brethren, if you wish to deal faithfully with your own souls; if you desire to know your true character and condition; in other words, if you wish to make sure work for eternity, there are three things which you must do:—You must consider, you must examine, and you must compare.

1. You must consider.—"Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways." There are many persons who do not, will not spend one single thought upon the subject of their soul's salvation! They can think about their riches, their honours, their pleasures; they can think about this and that scheme of gain and aggrandizement; indeed, they can think about any thing and every thing, except that which should engage their earliest and most serious attention—the salvation of their undying souls! Such persons may be said to live a dreaming life; and no wonder if such palm a fatal deception upon themselves, and go down to the grave with a "lie in their right hand."

My brethren, you must think about your spiritual state; you must frequently ask, what are your hopes for eternity? This is necessary to rouse the soul to life and activity. It is requisite as a preparation for something more. I hold, that the mind, to be excited,

must have the exciting object before it. How can beauty charm, if it be not looked upon? How can music please, if it be not attended to? How can there be the feeling of an object, when there is no contact? Ordinarily, the mind operates through its appropriate organ. If it wants to see, it directs the eye; if it wants to hear, it turns the ear; if it wants to feel, it extends the hand. Even so, the understanding is the eye of the mind; and, in order that the mind should be duly roused, the exciting object should be brought before the understanding, the eye of the mind, and then there is a setting in motion the will, the affections, and all the powers of the soul. Do I deny the doctrine of Divine influences? God forbid! It forms an essential part of the "faith once delivered to the saints;" but the Spirit operates in accordance with the moral and physical nature of man. How was the Psalmist converted? By the Spirit of God, unquestionably. But the manner, the mode, the way and means? By serious thought. Hear what he says—"I thought upon my ways, and turned my feet to thy testimonies." He was once an impenitent sinner, careless and secure in his sins. He was going to an eternal world under the power of an awful deception. But his character is changed. Mark the process!—"I thought upon my

ways." He first began to inquire whether he was living as he ought to live; whether he was walking in the right path—the path to heaven? Under the operation of serious thought, he was led to see that all was not right; that he was in a dangerous way; that he was not going to heaven, but to hell! What was the consequence? There was an end to his carnal security. Anxiety was waked up in his bosom, and a determination to act: "I turned my feet to thy testimonies." Aye, and there was promptness of action: "I made haste to keep thy commandments." Peter denied his Master, and for a season was quiet, and without any self-reproach. But we are told that "when he thought thereon, he wept." When Hazael came to the prophet, the man of God, it is said, fixed his eyes upon him, until he (the man of God) wept. The future crimes of Hazael were brought before the prophetic eye of the prophet, and his very soul was moved within him. The man of God could not restrain his tears—he wept. In the first chapter of Isaiah, God brings this charge against the children of Israel—"I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me:—The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib, but Israel doth not know." And why? The answer is given—"My people doth not consider." Thus it ap-

pears that there is much power in serious thought. If, then, a man would thoroughly prove his own work, he must, as a preliminary step, consider his ways—his moral conduct, his present state, his future prospects. He must seriously consider whither he is going, and whether the way in which he is now going will land him in happiness, or in misery; in heaven or in hell. But,

2. You must examine.—Serious consideration is not enough. There must, also, be a close and prayerful examination. If a merchant wishes to know precisely how he stands, he must not only think about his affairs, but he must also enter upon the work of careful examination. He must turn over the leaves of his day-book and ledger; he must take an inventory of his goods; he must look into his strong box and drawer; he must find out what he owes to others, and what others owe to him. Then, and not until then, can he know precisely how his business and pecuniary matters stand. Just so in relation to the case in hand. If a man desires to know his true state and condition, he must go beyond the matter of serious thought. He must enter, in good earnest, upon the work of self-examination. In the light of divine truth, he must examine, not merely his outward conduct and actions, but also, the state of his heart and affections.

He must examine his thoughts; for as a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. He must examine his motives, and his sentiments, and, in short, every thing which exerts an influence in the formation of his moral and religious character. With regard to a man's motive—this is an important matter; for oftentimes the motive stamps the character of the action. Should a person do you a kindness, you would be thankful; but suppose it should be ascertained that, in doing you this kindness, he never intended it, but, contrarywise, intended to do you a serious and lasting injury; when aware of his motive, there will be, if I mistake not, a very great abatement in your sense of obligation to him. Now, if motive is something with man, who looks upon the outward appearance, shall it not be something with God, who looketh upon the heart? Yes, motive is something: and many an action which appears fair and commendable in the eyes of men, is naught—of no value, and even odious in the sight of God, being vitiated by the motive. If, for example, we perform an action, good in itself, but perform it simply to please ourselves, or to gain human applause, without any promptings of a desire to honour or please God, certainly, there is no real virtue in this. Hence the apostle says: "Whether, therefore, ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to

the glory of God." O how does this principle wither many things, fair and beautiful in the eyes of men! How it reduces to dust and ashes many things deemed vastly meritorious, and even deserving of heaven! Examine your motives, then. Are they pure? Are they such as God will approve of? Again, you must examine your sentiments. Do they square with God's blessed word? "No matter what a man's sentiments are," says one, "if his actions are right." Is this correct? Then the believer and the unbeliever may be put upon the same level; and our Saviour uttered strange language when he said—"He that believeth on the Son, is not condemned; but he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." No matter what a man believes!—let us try the principle. Here are two persons who, outwardly, treat you in a manner equally respectful, but their opinions of you are widely different. One believes you to be a good man; the other believes you to be corrupt. Is sentiment nothing here? Sentiment is something; and, in relation to religious matters, the Bible is the great standard of correct sentiment:

"The judge which ends the strife,
Where wit and reason fail."

Now, there are persons who, because they are not profligate or profane, because they are moral men, in the common acceptation of the term, think that they are in a safe state—that they have no need of conversion, and that, because they have been men of fair moral character, they are fair candidates for heaven—aye, think that they certainly will be saved! Has such a man proved his own work? Does this sentiment of his fall in with the declarations of the sacred volume? Does it fall in with the scriptural saying, "Indignation and wrath, tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that sinneth"? Or with this—"Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things written in the book of the law to do them"? Or with this—"Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish"? Or with this—"Other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ"? Or with this—"Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God"? My hearers, take care! Palm no deception upon yourselves. Remember, all the declarations of this volume are true, divinely true, and must stand for ever, as it is written, "For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven." Beware how you trust to your own sentiments when they are not in accordance with the word of God. Most assuredly it will bring perdition upon your soul! O, be

entreated to bring your sentiments to this great test of truth, the Bible! Let every man dig deep, and lay a good foundation. "Let every man prove his own work."

3. You must compare.—Some persons are ready enough in their comparisons, but they happen not to be of the right kind! Some compare themselves with certain professors of religion; and, because they are better, (as they suppose,) than those professors of religion, whom they are wont to call "hypocrites," they fancy that they are very good. But may not a man be better than a "hypocrite," and not be a very good man after all? Some compare themselves with the majority of mankind; and because they, as they think, are better than the majority of mankind, conclude that they are in a safe state; but would not this have been a very unsafe test in the days of Noah? and how know they but it may be an unsafe test at the present time? These comparisons are not of the right kind. Permit me to show you "a more excellent way."

First: You must compare yourselves with the characters pronounced blessed by the Saviour, in his sermon upon the mount. Take this example: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Has your pride been humbled? Are you sensible of your emptiness and poverty, and do you feel

your need of a better righteousness than your own? "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Again: "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." Do you mourn after a godly sort? Do you mourn that you have sinned against a good and gracious God? and do you mourn after your own hard heart? "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." But take another example: "Blessed are the meek." Have you the meekness and gentleness of Christ? Can you bear injuries? Can you forgive your enemies? Has there been, in such matters, a radical change in the temper and disposition of your soul? Has the lion in you been converted into a lamb? the vulture into a dove? "Blessed are the meek." Once more: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Do you breathe after holiness? Do you sincerely and earnestly desire to be delivered from the least and last remains of sin? Is there a peculiar sweetness and charm in heaven as a place of perfect moral purity? where you shall not have one wicked thought, nor one unhallowed feeling, nor one improper desire, nor utter one sinful word, through all eternity?

Can you enter fully into the feelings of the poet, when he says,

"O, glorious hour! O, blest abode!
I shall be near and like my God;
And flesh and sin no more control
The sacred pleasures of the soul."

And are these lines delightful and refreshing to your heart?

"There shall we see his face,
And never, never sin;
There from the rivers of his grace
Drink endless pleasures in."

If these beatitudes suit you, then doubtless you are the children of God. The Saviour does not mention names; he does what is much better, he describes characters, and with these characters he connects the blessing. If, then, the character is yours, the blessing, of course, is yours also. But

Secondly: You are to compare yourselves with those known to have been truly pious. Here is a principle, or matter of fact, which must never be forgotten—that true piety is substantially the same in every age, and in every bosom. As face answers to face in water, so does the heart of man to man. In all great points, in all essential matters, the experience of one pious soul is substantially the experience of another. Bring in the rich man and the

poor man, the learned and the unlearned, the stripling and the man of age; bring in the Methodist, and the Presbyterian, the Baptist, and the Episcopalian: in short, bring in persons representing the different ranks and classes of society, and the different denominations, too; and, I may add, let them come from the different quarters of the globe; let each be soundly converted; let them have one common language, and let them converse freely on the subject of Christian experience, and it will be found, that in all leading matters of experimental religion, there is scarcely a shade of difference between them! Yes, they are all brought into the same school; they all have the same teacher; they all learn the same lessons—so teaches the Bible, as it is written in Isaiah liv. 13: "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord, and great shall be the peace of thy children." It is true, some are, so to speak, more apt scholars—are better taught than others—but, I repeat it, all are brought into the same school; all have the same teacher; and all learn the same lessons! These things being so, if we would prove our own work; if we would desire to know whether we have the root of the matter in us: in other words, if we wish to know whether we are really the children of God or not, we must, as we have said, compare ourselves with those known to be the

children of God. To illustrate what I mean, I will suppose that you are anxious about your soul; you have had some mental distress, and some comfort, but your evidence of being a child of God is not clear; you wish to prove your own work, or religious character. This being the case, I will place you in certain circumstances, in which you are to compare yourselves with those known to be pious, in similar circumstances, and if there be an agreement, if they have true piety, so have you!

First—I will suppose that you are in circumstances of deep affliction. Was not Job a child of God? and was he not deeply afflicted? And now, what was his spirit? what the exercises of his mind? what the breathings of his soul? They are recorded, and distinctly marked. Observe—when one wave of affliction after another had passed over him, and he was ready to sink in deep waters, one said unto him, "Curse God and die." And what said he?—"Have we received good at the hand of the Lord, and shall we not receive evil? The Lord gave, the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord. Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." Is this your spirit? Can you truly adopt this language? Then, if Job was pious, so are you; if eternal life be his reward, you shall possess the same;

for piety is the same in every age, and in every bosom.

Again: I will suppose that you are thinking upon the words of the Saviour: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." You have had some sorrow of heart on account of your sins; you have shed some tears, you have heaved some sighs, but you are not entirely satisfied that you are a true penitent—do you ask what is to be done? I answer—find out some one known to have been a true penitent; find out what were the exercises of his mind; compare yours with his, and if they correspond, then, if he was a penitent, so are you. David was certainly a true penitent; but where shall we find the penitential exercises of the Psalmist recorded? In the fifty-first Psalm. Let us turn to that Psalm, and from the language of his lips, we may learn the breathings of his soul. What are his words? "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy loving kindness: according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me. Against thee, thee only, have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified when thou speakest, and be clear when thou judgest.—Create within me a clean heart,

O God, and renew within me a right spirit. Cast me not away from thy presence, and take not thine Holy Spirit from me." Now, say, you read the whole Psalm; you here recognize, substantially, the exercises of your own mind. You are astonished that one who lived under another dispensation, and at a period so remote, should have had thoughts and feelings, emotions and desires, so exactly corresponding with your own! Is this so? Then the case is clear: if David was a penitent, so are you; if eternal life be his reward, you shall possess the same; for "piety is the same in every age, and in every bosom." "Let every man prove his own work."

Again: Touching the matter of faith—I will suppose that you have been meditating upon these words: "Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." You have some hope that you do exercise faith in Christ, but you have heard so much about historical faith, and speculative faith, and saving faith, and living faith, and dead faith, you are bewildered; you know not whether you have the right kind of faith—that which really and truly unites the soul to Christ, and which has the promise of life everlasting. Do you again ask what is to be done? I answer, as in the former case: find one known to have been a true believer; find out what his views and

feelings were, in relation to our blessed Saviour, and if yours correspond with his, then may it be known to you whether you are a true believer or not. But where shall we find one known to have been a true believer? Peter was one. Did he ever express his views and feelings in relation to Christ? He did, and on a very important occasion. Our Saviour had taught certain things which gave offence; and as we are told, many of his disciples went back, and walked no more with him. And Jesus turned to the twelve and said, "Will ye also go away?" And Peter said, "Lord, to whom shall we go but unto thee? for thou hast the words of eternal life." As if he had said: Lord Jesus! thou art our only hope—I for one must cling to thee! I am a poor, lost sinner, I cannot save myself. Thou art my only, only hope! Is this your language? Is this the very feeling of your soul? Then your case is clear. If Peter was a believer, so are you! If eternal life be his reward, you shall possess the same; for piety is the same, in every age, and in every bosom. "Let every man prove his own work."

Again: We will suppose that you are thinking on the subject of the Divine government. You wish to know whether your views and feelings in relation to this matter are of the right kind; whether they are such as indicate

true piety. What is to be done? Adopt the same plan already suggested. Find one known to have true piety; find out the breathings of his heart on this subject; compare yours with his, and then you may know whether you belong to the number of the people of God, or not. Take the case of Isaiah. No man questions his piety. What does he say? "Say unto Zion, thy God reigneth." This is the language of joy and gratulation—the language of one pleased with the thought that God is upon the throne, and who wishes the tidings thereof to be carried, to be spread on every hand. David was also a child of God, and what does he say? "The Lord reigneth! let the earth rejoice! The Lord reigneth, let the multitude of the isles be glad thereof." And again: "The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations: Praise ye the Lord!"

But there is a case, if possible, more in point still. It is that of those who are actually around the throne in heaven. "And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and all ye that fear him, both small and great. And I heard," says John, "as it were, the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omipotent reign-

eth!" Rev. xix. 6. Now, is all this in harmony with your feelings and desires? Do you rejoice in the government of God? in his supreme, universal, and everlasting dominion? Is the language, "the Lord reigneth," pleasant to your ear? Does the loud and harmonious shout in the heavenly world, "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" start the glad response in your soul—Amen! Alleluia! If these things are so, you need no audible voice, coming from heaven, to assure you that you are a child of God; you need no angel to come down from the skies, to assure you that your name is written in the book of life. You have the evidence in your own bosom—having the spirit and stamp of the people of God. This being clear, then every thing else is clear: and, I hesitate not to say, that you are a child of God—that you have "a good hope through grace." Aye, and it is your privilege, even now, to "rejoice in hope of the glory of God." This is taught in our text—"Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

We have explained the *precept*, we would now lay before you

II. *The motive.*—It is expressed in the words just repeated—"Then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another:"—that

is, he shall have independent joy. His consolations shall not flow from any thing around him, but shall be within him, as a well of water springing up into everlasting life. The happiness of unconverted men depends, very much, upon outward circumstances. When the world smiles upon them, and they have temporal prosperity, they may have something like pleasure, playing around the heart; but when the world frowns, and adversity comes, then their springs of comfort are cut off, and they are ready to say, with Micah—"Ye have taken away my gods, and what have I beside?" See Cardinal Wolsey! Whilst basking in the sunshine of royal favour, he seemed to be a happy man. He lived in splendour; he revelled in a palace; noblemen were his attendants; and, like Solomon of old, he had access to every source of worldly enjoyment. But, when reverses came, when Henry VIII. put him out of office, and the nobles of the court turned their backs upon him, he became a wretched man, and, it is said, died of a broken heart. He was no Christian—he had no springs of consolation within him; he had no source of rejoicing in his own bosom; no gracious affections in exercise; no cheering hopes of heavenly bliss. He had nothing to sustain him; and, literally, his grey hairs went down

with sorrow to the grave. How different is it with the truly pious man! His chief sources of enjoyment are within—deeply seated in his own soul. See, for example, Paul and Silas at Philippi. They are shamefully treated. By order of the magistrates, they are beaten; they are thrust into the inner prison; their feet are made fast in the stocks; the whole world is frowning upon them; and one would suppose that they can have no source of comfort whatever. Surely, they are the most wretched persons in Philippi! It is a mistake. They are the happiest—the very happiest! They are too happy to sleep! for, we are told, that "at midnight, Paul and Silas prayed and sang praises unto God." It is written—"Is any merry? let him sing psalms." At a midnight hour, Paul and Silas gave this proof of joyfulness, even in a dungeon! Whilst others are wrapped in slumber, Paul and Silas are singing—their inward consolations are so great! Yes, this, and not sorrow, drives away sleep from their eyes, and slumber from their eyelids. They are happy! they are joyful! They forget that the gloom of the inner prison is around them. Celestial radiance is beaming indirect upon their souls! They forget that their feet are made fast in the stocks; they seem to be walking in a large place! Their

backs, also, are lacerated with stripes; but this too, is forgotten—their souls are not lacerated; their souls are happy! In the midst of all their worldly tribulations, they have inward comfort. The full tide of heavenly consolation is flowing into every chamber of their souls! I repeat it, they are happy—the happiest men in Philippi; yea, the happiest men in Philippi! How can this be accounted for? Our text explains the whole matter. "They have proved their own work;" they have full evidence that they are the children of God; that God loves them; and that soon their "weary feet shall reach the peaceful inn of lasting rest." Yes, in their bosoms they have the blest assurance, that only a little while, and they will have shed their last tear! will have heaved their last sigh! will have felt their last pang! Only a little while, and they will be with God and his angels! Only a little while, and they will be looking their Redeemer in the face with joy! Only a little while, and they will be bathing in glory, as in the sunlight of heaven! How beautifully and strongly does this illustrate our text—"Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

But have we not seen examples before our

own eyes? Have we not seen the children of God wonderfully sustained in the hour of trouble? Have we not seen them happy, exceedingly happy, in the time of their deepest affliction? Yes, when every thing of a temporal nature seemed to be against them, they have been enabled to say with the prophet—"Although the fig-tree shall not blossom, neither shall fruit be in the vine: the labour of the olive shall fail, and the fields shall yield no meat: the flock shall be cut off from the fold, and there shall be no herd in the stall; yet will I rejoice in the Lord; I will joy in the God of my salvation." Thank God, for that religion which can sustain us in the day of severest trial, and give us rich consolation amid scenes of deepest worldly sorrow! Which can lighten the heaviest burden, and sweeten the bitterest cup, and brighten the darkest scene; yea, which in the hour of deepest affliction, can give us "a young heaven begun below, and glory in the bud!" "The people here, will say," said the late venerated Moses Hoge, when dying in Philadelphia, away from his home—"the people here will say, 'Poor old man!' Why," exclaimed he, "I am the happiest man in Philadelphia!" "My dear sister," said I to a beloved member of my church, who was near her end—"my

dear sister, how do you find yourself this morning?" Grasping my hand, with much emotion, she replied, "My dear pastor, I am in pain, in great pain; but O," continued she, "I am happy! I am happy! O, I am so happy!"

> "Jesus can make a dying bed
> Feel soft as downy pillows are!"

O, let me but have grace to prove my own work—let me only have clear scriptural evidence that I am a Christian—a real Christian—a true child of God, and I am free to say, for one, I can be happy on a bed of straw—on a bed of affliction! on the rack! on the wheel! bound to the stake! or amid the flames of martyrdom! If God be for us, who can be against us? Only think!—one short night, and then everlasting day! One pang, and then, joy! joy! and joy for evermore! "Let every man prove his own work, and then shall he have rejoicing in himself alone, and not in another."

SERMON VIII.

THE SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST, AND THEIR DESIGN.

And at the ninth hour, Jesus cried with a loud voice, saying, Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?—MARK xv. 34.

NEVER, O never, my friends, was there a more awful hour than that in which these words were pronounced by the suffering Jesus! It was an hour of wrath, of awful vengeance, of mysterious darkness! It was the dread hour of atonement, when the high destinies of man were sealed with blood! Nature trembled, and stood aghast! Midnight veiled the earth and skies! The universe was wrapped in solemn silence, whilst the Eternal Father, bending from his awful throne, fixed his eyes on Calvary, and laid his hand heavy upon the darling of his bosom! Oh! what a scene was there! The "Lord of glory," stripped of his splendours, surrounded by his enemies, and nailed to the accursed tree! His head is wounded with pricking thorns; his hands and his feet are pierced with rugged nails; his precious blood gushes forth, streams down, and smokes upon the mount! His soul is in anguish, and almost overwhelmed, he cries with a grievous and bitter cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani?—my God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

O that sound!—so strange, so awful, so mysterious! Methinks it rends the heavens! It reaches the courts of glory! Suddenly, the music of heaven dies away! Mute is the tongue of the seraph, silent the harps of the angelic throng! All the heavenly ones gaze in astonishment upon the wondrous scene!

"Around the bloody tree,
They pressed with strong desire,
That wondrous sight to see,
The Lord of life expire!
And could their eyes
Have known a tear,
Had dropped it there
In sad surprise!"

My brethren, we would present no scene of human grandeur, but a scene far better calculated to touch the ingenuous heart. We would not rehearse the achievements of some mighty conqueror, who has desolated the earth, drenched its fields in blood, and grasped his laurels, reeking with human gore. No, we would rather take you by the hand, and lead you to Calvary, and there point out to you our blessed Saviour, suspended on the cross. O see! He suffers! It is in a cause worthy of a God. He dies! Garlands of victory grace his immortal brow; and the rising dead chant his triumphs before the eternal throne! But whither would we go? It is the suffering, not the triumphing Saviour, we are

this morning called upon to contemplate. Lo! he hangs upon the tree! Wrapped in a vesture dipped in blood, he treads the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God. Now, the mandate goes forth from the throne of the Eternal King, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and the man that is my fellow, saith the Lord: smite the Shepherd!" And think, O my soul, the Shepherd was smitten! The sword of divine vengeance pierced his very heart! and now, shrouded in darkness, and almost expiring, in agony he cries, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani? which is, being interpreted, My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" My brethren, here is a scene, a spectacle of a most extraordinary character! It is full of wonder and mystery, and is said to be pregnant with immense consequences. Nay, it is said to be the point upon which hangs the only hope of a ruined world! Let us take up the subject at this time, as if we never heard of it before. For this purpose, there are three inquiries which we would base upon our text:

I. Who is this sufferer?
II. What did he suffer? and
III. For whom, or what did he suffer?

I. Who is this sufferer?—His character is certainly unique; it is without precedent, without parallel! For example: the circumstances

connected with his birth, show plainly that he is no ordinary personage. What says the Evangelist Matthew? "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east, saying, Where is he that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen his star in the east, and are come to worship him. When Herod the king had heard these things, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him. And when he had gathered all the chief priests and scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where Christ should be born. And they said unto him, In Bethlehem of Judea: for thus it is written by the prophet, And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule my people Israel. Then Herod, when he had privily called the wise men, inquired of them diligently what time the star appeared. And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go, and search diligently for the young child; and when ye have found him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship him also. When they had heard the king, they departed; and lo, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great

joy. And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh. And being warned of God in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way." And what says Luke? "There were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone around about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." "And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." Now, these things are wonderful. When did a star announce the birth, or angels sing the the natal song of any other born into the world?

Again: The circumstances connected with the presentation of the child Jesus in the temple, show plainly that he is no common personage. Luke gives this account of the mat-

ter: "And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon; and the same man was just and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Ghost was upon him. And it was revealed unto him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came by the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him after the custom of the law, then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: for mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel." These things also are unprecedented. Who is this sufferer? The circumstances connected with his life show plainly also, that he was no ordinary personage. He spake as never man spake. His miracles were stupendous, and all miracles of kindness; and, on several occasions, miraculous attestations were given to his character, peculiar to himself. At his baptism, the Spirit, in a bodily form, as a dove, descended and rested upon him; and an audible voice was heard from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." On one occasion, an angel ministered to him in the desert; and on an-

other, Moses and Elijah conversed with him on the mount. He asserted his dominion over all things; and, in proof thereof, he not only healed the sick, and raised the dead, and cast out devils; he not only opened the eyes of the blind, and unstopped the ears of the deaf, and caused the lame man to leap as a hart, and the tongue of the dumb to sing; but he stilled the tempest, walked upon the waves of the sea, turned water into wine, and declared that he existed before Abraham; that he was with the Father before the world was; that he was Lord of the Sabbath; that he had power to forgive sins; was the resurrection and the life, and would, finally, judge the world at the last day! Who is this sufferer?

The circumstances connected with his death also show that he is no common personage. It is true there were certain things of a humiliating character connected with his death; but these were closely linked with other things of a character entirely different. Did Judas betray him for thirty pieces of silver? He did; but afterwards he brought back to the priests the pieces of silver; cast them down in the temple, and, in the agony of an accusing conscience, he went out and hanged himself. Did Peter deny him? He did; but a few hours afterwards he went out and wept bitterly. Did Herod, with his men of war, set him at naught

and mock him, and array him in a gorgeous robe? He did, and yet was constrained to say that he found no fault in him. Did Pilate condemn him? He did; but also, calling for water, he washed his hands, and said, I am innocent of the blood of this just man. Moreover, we are informed, that whilst Pilate was upon the judgment-seat, his wife sent unto him, and said, "Have thou nothing to do with that just man, for I have this day suffered many things in a dream, because of him." Was he crucified? He was; but there was darkness over all the land, from the sixth to the ninth hour! Did he finally bow his head, and give up the ghost? He did; but the veil of the temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom; and the rocks were rent; and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints, which slept, arose and came out of their graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many.

When he was laid in Joseph's sepulchre, it is true, he was under the power of death. Moreover, a great stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre. The stone was sealed, and a guard was set; but, on the morning of the third day, "behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat

upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow." And, finally, he led his disciples "out as far as to Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, whilst he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven." These are all wonderful things, and we find nothing like them in connection with any other who ever appeared on earth. The question, then, returns, Who is this sufferer? I answer—First: He is no mere man. I know it, for the Bible tells us that his goings forth have been from of old, even from everlasting. This can be affirmed of no mere man; and therefore we know that he is no mere man. Nor can he be any mere angel. We know it; for the apostle expressly says—"He took not on him the nature of angels." Who is this mysterious personage? He is no mere creature, however exalted. His works prove this; for, according to the Scriptures, "the world was made by him, and the world knew him not." His names and titles prove the same thing; for, in the Bible, he is called, "God," Heb. i. 8; "The mighty God," Isa. ix. 6; "The Lord of glory," Rev. i. 11; "Alpha and Omega;" "the Almighty;" and "God over all, blessed for ever." These names and titles can be applied to no mere creature, however exalted; and, therefore, Jesus Christ is

no mere creature. In corroboration of this, notice this language of Paul, speaking of Christ: "He took upon him the form of a servant." Now, the loftiest creatures are, in the very nature of the case, God's servants; but if Christ took upon him the form of a servant, he must originally have possessed a nature above that of the loftiest creature, and therefore could not have been any mere creature, however exalted. But the question is still before us, Who is this sufferer? Isaiah tells us: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulders. And his name shall be called, Wonderful, Counsellor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace." John tells us, (ch. i. 1,) "In the beginning was the word; and the word was with God, and the word was God. And the word was made flesh, and dwelt among us; and we beheld his glory as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth." Indeed, the Saviour himself tells us, "I am the root and offspring of David." This is enough—we are now prepared to affirm that this blessed sufferer is very God, and very man: in other words, he has a two-fold nature—the divine and the human—in mysterious, yet all harmonious union. Do you stumble at the mystery? Paul did not; for, says he,

"without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness. God was manifest in the flesh." But it may be objected, Does not the sufferer, addressing the everlasting Father, say, "My God, my God?" I answer, he does. But if this disproves the supreme divinity of the Son, then when the Father, addressing the Son, calls him God, saying, "Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever," (Heb. i. 8,) by a parity of reason, this disproves the supreme divinity of the Father, also. No, my brethren, the doctrine of the two-fold nature of Christ, though mysterious, is true. In relation to his divine nature, he was the Mighty God, the everlasting Father; in reference to his human nature, he was a child born, a son given. As regards the divine nature, the Word was God; as regards the human nature, the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us. As to his divine nature, Christ was the "Root" of David—the source of David's being; as to his human nature, he was David's "offspring"—David's son. But if the doctrine of the two-fold nature of Christ be mysterious, it is true, as we have said; and not only is it true, but needful. He must have a human nature, to obey the law, and a divine nature to give merit to that obedience. He must have a human nature to suffer, a divine nature to give efficacy to his sufferings. He must have a hu-

man nature to have a brother's heart; a divine nature to have have an Almighty arm. O, my brethren, if the doctrine of the two-fold nature of Christ be mysterious, remember, it is both true and needful, and, I may add, precious! Paul evidently thought it so; hence this language—"We have not a high-priest, who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities, but was, in all points, tempted like as we are, yet without sin."—Yes, we know now who the sufferer is. His character is developed—his nature is made known. One distant, and yet near! One who unites in himself both the the divine and human nature—all the glories of God, attempered with the milder beauties of a perfect man. Having given a scriptural answer to the first inquiry, we proceed to consider,

II. What did he suffer?—The sufferings of our Saviour were great, all the time he sojourned on earth; but we believe that his sufferings reached their climax when he uttered the cry in our text. Then it was that the storm of wrath which was hastening on to break down the pillars of the earth, and sweep its guilty millions into an everlasting hell, fell, in all its fury, upon this great sufferer! But, not to anticipate, we remark—First: That he suffered great loss. If some mighty earthly monarch should be stripped of his crown, and

reduced to the condition of a plebian subject; or, if some rich man should be deprived of all his possessions, and be reduced to the condition of a houseless and friendless beggar, you would certainly think that he had sustained great loss. Now, think of Him, who once commanded the treasures of the universe, but on earth had no place where to lay his sacred head. According to the Scriptures, our blessed Saviour emptied himself—though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor, that we, through his poverty, might be rich. One said—"Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest." And what was his reply? "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay his head." And John mentions a circumstance which, I confess, I had long overlooked:—on a certain occasion, the Saviour taught the multitude; and when the evening came, "every man went into his own house;" but "Jesus went to the Mount of Olives!" Blessed Saviour! The poorest of his hearers had some house; but Jesus had none! So he went to the Mount of Olives! Ah! my brethren, it is even so—"Though he was rich, for our sakes he became poor!" Yes, he suffered great loss. But,

Secondly: He suffered great indignity. If a true prophet should be treated as an impos-

tor, or a lawful monarch as a plebeian subject, you would say that an indignity had been done to him. Now remember that this sufferer is expressly called "the Lord of Glory." He is, in deed and in truth, the Son of God, and only think of the treatment he met with on earth. He was the "Rose of Sharon," but he was esteemed as a "root out of a dry ground." He was the chiefest among ten thousand, but he was considered as one "without form or comeliness." He was the "angel of the covenant," but he received not the honours of an angel. His own people shunned his embrace, as though he was some malignant fiend, whose touch was death, and whose breath was a blasting pestilence. But he was more than an angel. He was the "Lord of angels;" he was "the brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person;" and when he gave proof of it, by the commanding evidence of the most stupendous miracles, his enemies raged against him more and more. Their malice and envy have kindled up a fire in their bosoms. They desire his death! They thirst for his blood! They long for the time to come when they shall feast their eyes with his streaming veins, and regale their ears with his dying groans! O see! an impious, ruffian band has invaded the retirement of our blessed Saviour! Their daring, sacrilegious hands,

have bound him fast!—Shall I proceed? Shall I rehearse what followed? It was enough to make an angel weep! It was enough to draw down thunderbolts of wrath! He is taken to the hall of Caiaphas; he is then hurried to Pilate's judgment bar! He is next taken to Herod, who, with his men of war, set him at naught! They plait a crown of thorns, and put it upon his head, and, bowing the knee, they smite him upon the head! He is next sent back to Pilate—false witnesses rise up against him! None dare appear in his behalf. The hall, the court, the very heavens, ring with the cry, "Crucify him! Crucify him!" Overawed by a raging multitude, Pilate gives sentence against him. And now all seemed licensed to revile and insult God's only Son! He is blindfolded and smitten upon the cheek! An insulting voice is heard, saying, Prophesy, thou Christ, who is he that smote thee? They buffet him, they scourge him, they spit in his face! And now the cross is erected; the instruments of torture are prepared. The third hour is come. O dreadful hour! A deed is done at which all worlds recoil with horror. The blessed Jesus is nailed to the cross—and that, too, between two malefactors, as though he were the chief malefactor. "The sun beheld the scene? No! the shocking scene drove back his chariot! midnight veiled his face!"

O what a moment was that! But is not malice at length charmed into pity? Is not envy at last converted into love? No, no! His enemies triumph and exult. They revile, they rail, they wag their heads, and exclaim, Ah, thou that destroyest the temple, and buildest it in three days, come down from the cross, and we will believe! This is echoed back by the chief priests and Pharisees, who contemptuously cry out and say, "He saved others, himself he cannot save." And now

"A solemn darkness veils the sky,
A sudden trembling shakes the ground."

But hark! a voice is heard: it comes from the suffering Jesus! Is it—Angels of my Father! crush these murderers dead? Vengeance of my God! blast them to an everlasting hell?—O no! It is the language of the angel of mercy; of the divine and compassionate Saviour of the world. It is this: "Father forgive them, they know not what they do." O, what a sufferer, and what indignities did he suffer! But,

Thirdly: Our Saviour suffered great mental anguish. Whilst his bodily sufferings must have been very great, (as he had all the physical sensibilities of human nature,) we have reason to believe that his mental sufferings, or the sorrows of his soul, were infinitely greater. Hence it is said, "He made his soul an offering

for sin;" and again, "He poured out his soul unto death." See this blessed sufferer in the garden; what is his language?—"Now is my soul exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." And again, "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." This prayer he offered a second time; and even yet a third time his plaintive voice is heard uttering the same thing: "O, my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me: nevertheless, not what I will, but what thou wilt." "And," says the Evangelist, "being in an agony, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was, as it were, great drops of blood, falling down upon the ground!" What is this? As yet, no impious hand had smitten his cheek; no rugged nails had pierced his hands or his feet; nor, as yet, had he been buffeted or scourged. Was it the anticipation of these things that overwhelmed him with sorrow? Was it the dread of such things which caused his prayer of agony and bloody sweat? O no! for on the cross he made no complaint of outward sufferings. He says not, O wicked soldiers! O cruel death! but "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" It is admitted that there is something mysterious in this matter. We cannot understand it now—we probably never will in this world. The main idea, how-

ever, seems to be this: The sinner was exposed to the frown of the Everlasting Father. Jesus Christ became the sinner's substitute; and, in some way or other, inexplicable to us, these frowns rested upon him. Whilst in the garden, and on the cross, the mandate went forth, "Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd! and against the man that is my Fellow, saith the Lord!" Whilst in the garden and on the cross, he was made to tread the wine-press of the wrath of Almighty God! Men did rail; devils did rage; hell did howl. All the billows of the pit, did, as it were, roll over his holy soul! Suddenly, even the light of the divine countenance was withdrawn, God the Father frowns upon the Son of his love. O this frown! this mysterious, tremendous frown! It spreads an unearthly gloom over the mind of the sufferer; it wraps his soul in agony; it extorts the piercing, bitter cry, "Eloi, Eloi, lama sabacthani? My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken me?" Thank God! the cloud soon passed away. The tide of sorrow ceased to flow. "It is finished!" said the dying but triumphant Saviour, and that word sealed the redemption of a ruined world! But this brings us to consider, more particularly, the last inquiry based upon our text:

III. For whom, or for what, did he thus suffer?—Not for himself. No, he was holy,

harmless, undefiled, and separate from sinners. There was nothing in his own person to attract the lightnings of divine vengeance. For whom or what, then, did he suffer? Not for sinning angels. No, for

> "From heaven the sinning angels fell;
> And wrath and darkness chained them down."

This glorious One never interposed to shield them. They, in righteous judgment, were left exposed to wrath; were left to bear the punishment of their own sin. The question then returns again—For whom, or for what, did Christ suffer? This question is one which comes near to us, and one, methinks, which should have power to melt the hardest heart, and subdue the most rebellious soul. Only think! the very objects for which Christ suffered are not far away. They are near us. They are within the walls of this very house, this very day! He suffered for sinners of Adam's race. This doctrine is abundantly taught in this volume. It is confirmed by the testimony of many, who "spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost." "Christ our Passover," says Paul, "was sacrificed for us;" yea, "died for us." "He suffered for us," says Peter; yea, "he himself bare our sins in his own body on the tree." And what is the language of John? "Herein is love, not that

we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be a propitiation for our sins." And again, hear the beautiful doxology, which he offers up in his own name, and that of the whole Church, militant and triumphant—"Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood; and hath made us kings and priests unto God, and his Father—to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen."

But observe—this doctrine of the atonement, or substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, was equally well known to the prophets of ancient days. Hence the language of Isaiah: "He was wounded for our transgressions; he was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid upon him the iniquity of us all." And Zechariah, speaking in the name of the Lord, evidently has reference to the same thing, when he uses this language: "As for thee also, by the blood of thy covenant, I have sent forth thy prisoners out of the pit, wherein is no water." The Saviour himself taught the same doctrine of the atonement, when he said, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep." And certainly, also, there is

reference to the same thing, what time all the redeemed in heaven are represented as singing this song: "Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the seals thereof, for thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God, by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation." Whatever cavils or objections may be started against the doctrine by sceptics and unbelievers, we see plainly it is a Bible doctrine; it is written in the Scriptures as with a sunbeam. Yes, it is the great central doctrine of the Christian system, around which all others revolve, and upon which all others depend. Strike it out, and you strike the sun from the firmament! you wrap the whole world in gloom! you shroud the whole family of man in the darkness of never-ending despair! But the doctrine is not only a Bible doctrine, it is most precious. It is full of beauty and sweetness; of grandeur and of glory. It is calculated to excite the highest admiration; to fill the whole soul with the full tide of wonder, love, and joy.

You may have seen the representation given of this matter, by Christmas Evans, the eloquent Welsh divine. I do not recollect his words: I give you, as well as I can, the main idea:—Suppose a large enclosure, walled up to heaven, with gates of brass. Within this enclosure, a large multitude of human beings,

presenting every form and variety of woe. On the outer side, Mercy is seen, leaning upon the gate, weeping. As, ever and anon, she looks through the bars, at the wretched crowd, she sighs, and exclaims — O that this gate were open! O that I could but enter in! I would heal the sick; I would raise the fallen; I would cheer the faint; I would bind up the broken-hearted; I would soothe the wretched; I would wipe away the tears from the eyes of the sorrowful; I would diffuse happiness on every hand! Just at this time, the heavens are opened, and the Son of God is seen descending in pomp and grandeur, surrounded by a host of mighty angels. Hovering over the gate, he looks kindly at Mercy, as she weeps, and says—Mercy, why weepest thou? "Mine eyes affect my heart," replies Mercy; "I have gazed at this wretched throng; I have contemplated their many sorrows. Their case is truly an evil one. O, that this gate were opened! O, that I could enter in! I would heal the sick; I would raise the fallen; I would cheer the faint; I would bind up the broken-hearted; I would make them happy!" "And why can you not enter in?" says the Son of God. "These," replies Mercy, "are sinners; they have rebelled against the Eternal King, and stern Justice has reared these walls to heaven, and bolted and barred this gate of

brass." "Is there no remedy?" said the Son of God. "None," said Mercy; and again she sighed, and her tears trickled down! "No remedy?" repeated the Son of God. "None," said Mercy, "except one of sufficient dignity can be found, who would be willing to make an atonement for them—bearing their sins, in his own body, upon the tree." "Do I possess sufficient dignity?" said the Son of God. Mercy bowed before the "Brightness of the Father's glory, and the express image of his person." Justice was appealed to by the heavenly One. Justice bowed low in the presence of Jehovah's equal—in the presence of him, whom all the angels in heaven are commanded to worship and adore. That was a time of love. The heart of the Blessed One yearned over Adam's ruined race; and he said—"Upon me be this evil, Justice. I will take their place. For them, I will make the great atonement; I will bear their sins, in my own body, upon the tree." "When?" said Justice. "Four thousand years from this time," replied the Son of God. It was ratified; it was recorded in the archives of heaven. And, Justice, with a mighty hand, opened the ponderous gate. And Mercy entered. With angel speed, she flew! She mingled with the crowd; she healed the sick; she raised the fallen; she cheered the faint; she bound up the broken-hearted;

she made many, many happy! She was engaged in this blessed work through the long roll of four thousand years. At the time appointed, Justice descended, upon a black and stormy cloud. His hand grasped fierce lightnings—at his feet rolled mighty thunders! The earth trembled; and the sun ceased to shine! "Mercy!" exclaimed stern Justice. "Mercy! the hour is come! Where is the substitute?" "Yonder he is," replies Mercy; "Yonder he is, bearing his cross on Calvary's brow!" Justice looked up to heaven, and called for fire to descend, and light upon the soul of the holy Jesus! Fire descended upon the victim! It burned, and burned furiously! It consumed the humanity, but when it touched the divinity, it expired! And Mercy, with joy unutterable, exclaimed, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will toward men!" Yea, heaven rang jubilee, whilst saints and angels, without number, shouted, "Glory to God in the highest, on earth, peace, good will toward men!"

O, my brethren, the scene presented on Calvary was truly a wonderful scene! The work there accomplished was, beyond all comparison, a mighty work, a glorious work. It is that which will add countless millions of happy beings to the already innumerable host of shining ones in glory! and that which will,

through all the cycles of endless years, fill the great temple of God Almighty with sounding praise! And, my Christian brethren, what shall we say of Him, who, as we have already said, on the cross crushed the serpent's head, calmed the frowns of angry justice, and there won for his people crowns of glory, and thrones of everlasting splendour? Well has the name "Wonderful" been added to the splendid list of names and titles which he bears and will for ever bear! He is wonderful in his two-fold nature, being both God and man! He is wonderful in his birth; wonderful in his life; wonderful in his death; wonderful in his resurrection, and wonderful in his ascension. He is wonderful in the eyes of angels, and wonderful in the eyes of all worlds; but especially should he be considered wonderful in our eyes, for O how wonderful was that love which caused him to suffer such loss, such indignity, and such untold sorrows on our account! How wonderful, that he who was so rich, should, for our sakes, become so poor! That he who in heaven commanded the treasures of the universe, should on earth have no place where to lay his head! How wonderful, that he who was originally the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person, should wrap his Godhead in a veil of our inferior clay! How wonderful, that he who was God's coequal, co-

eternal Son, should exchange the bosom of his Father for a manger! How wonderful, that he who is the Fountain of all glory, should become a "Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief!"—that he who is the Angel of Mercy, should find no mercy himself!—that he who is the final Judge, should himself stand condemned at Pilate's bar! How wonderful, that he whose title is "King of kings and Lord of lords," should exchange his throne for a cross, his diadem of glory for a crown of thorns, and his robes of light and majesty for a vesture dipped in blood! Think! O my soul! how wonderful, that he who was the source of all honour, should be buffeted, and scourged, and spit upon! that he who was the Prince of life, should be slain! and that he whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain, should be laid in Joseph's tomb! "Without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh." Wonderful, wonderful Saviour!

"Come, expressive silence, muse his praise!"

SERMON IX.*

THE TOMB OF JESUS.

Come, see the place where the Lord lay.—MATT. xxviii. 6.

THERE is a power of association, and the exercise of this power oftentimes awakens feelings both pleasant and mournful to the soul. Returning, for example, to the place of our nativity, after a long absence, how do the recollections of former times crowd upon the mind! The scenes of our childhood are before us, and every object around serves to give rise to a train of pleasing or saddening reflection. This house, that field, this beaten pathway, that shady grove—all have a nameless charm, by reason of certain tender recollections associated with them. Walk over the field of battle, where the contest raged which decided the fate of your country; and, if there her independence was achieved, how sacred is the spot—how pleasant are all the associations thereof! But if there "freedom shrieked," and the chains of despotism were made strong, you sigh, and turn away. Visit the subterra-

* For some fine thoughts in this sermon, I acknowledge myself indebted to Dr. Sprague, of Albany.

nean ruins of Herculaneum and Pompeii; and as you stand amid the relics of ancient magnificence and grandeur, there is, so to speak, a resurrection of the dead before you. You can almost imagine that you are actually holding converse with those, over whose slumbering ashes many a long century has rolled. Enter that graveyard, approach that hallowed spot, where sleeps, in death, some venerated father, or beloved mother, or wife, or brother, or sister, or some sweet little babe; and how does busy memory hurry you back to some past scene of domestic enjoyment! The scenes of by-gone days are full before you; and under the influence of a kind of momentary delirium, you are ready to speak to the very dead, and say—"Farewell, dear object of my tenderest affections, farewell!" Silence reigns! Pensive, you hang over the cold monumental marble; or, in the sadness of a smitten heart, you gaze upon the rank grass, which waves over precious dust. Still, silence reigns! A soft enchantment is upon you. You linger—you look—you drop the tear of affection—you think unutterable things! O how sacred is that spot! How tender are all the associations thereof! Disciples of Jesus, you, who this day are to commemorate his dying love, "come, see the place where the Lord lay!" There was a garden, and in that garden there

was a sepulchre: there laid they the body of our Lord. It was the work of a friend, the last sad tribute of his love. Yes, the bloody deed had now been accomplished; the Lord of glory had been crucified and slain. He had bowed his head upon the cross, and exclaimed, with his dying breath, "It is finished!" The soldier, too, had thrust the spear into his side, when Joseph of Arimathea, a rich man, and who also was one of Jesus' disciples, went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of our Lord. Having obtained the precious boon, he took the body down from the cross, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewed out of the rock. See! O see! there sleeps in death the Redeemer of the world!

"Three days within the grave's unbroken gloom
The Hope of Israel slept;
Three mournful days, around the hallowed tomb,
The chosen watch was kept."

And now the grey dawn is seen in the east; the shadows of night are fleeing away. Let us, in imagination, fall in with the beloved women, who, with spices and ointments, are going to the sepulchre. And, as they were going, they said among themselves, "Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre? And when they came, they saw that the stone was rolled away; for it was

very great." And now commences a series of events, the most surprising that men or angels ever witnessed. But let us hear the narrative of the Evangelist: "In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn, toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, to see the sepulchre. And, behold, there was a great earthquake; for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came, and rolled back the stone from the door of the sepulchre, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow. And, for fear of him, the keepers did shake, and became as dead men. And the angel answered, and said unto the women, Fear not ye, for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay; and go quickly, and tell his disciples, that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth forth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you." What strange tidings are these! The Master risen from the dead! Yes, it is even so; for the beloved women have seen a vision of angels, which affirmed the fact. Nay, one in bright clothing points to the empty tomb, and says, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay!" Is this a dream? Is this the vision of a distempered imagination?

O no; for there sits the angel in bright clothing!—and his voice, it rings so sweetly upon the ear, "Come, see the place where the Lord lay." As if he had said, Let the keepers shake, and become as dead men! I have no word of comfort for them. But, beloved women, fear not ye. I know what brought you here. I see the spices and ointments in your hands: Fear not ye; nor is there any occasion for spices and ointments now! The Lord is risen! is risen indeed! Do you doubt it? The body is gone! The tomb is empty! "Come, see the place where the Lord lay!" O that sacred, hallowed spot! How dear are all the associations thereof! They are such as dying Christians may well linger upon: they are such as saints in glory love; and such as may form an appropriate and delightful theme for this, the morning of our communion Sabbath.

I. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and mark the proof of his resurrection. When the angel said, "He is not here, but is risen," he points to the empty tomb, as proof of the fact. I know that in ordinary circumstances, the absence of a body deposited in a tomb, or sepulchre, is no proof, whatever, of the resurrection of that body; but in the case before us, it is the most convincing that can be adduced. Observe, it is admitted that the body

of our Saviour was laid in the tomb. It is admitted that when there laid, it was under the power of death. It is admitted that our Lord frequently predicted that he would rise again from the dead on the third day. And it is well known that the chief priests and elders had special reasons for falsifying, if they could, the predictions of our Lord. Moreover, that a stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre; that this stone was sealed, and a guard was set—these things also are not denied; and yet, on the morning of the third day, the body is not there! The tomb is empty—the body gone! Now, the question is, What has become of that body? If not risen, it must have been taken away. By whom? Not by the chief priests and Pharisees: this was the very thing against which they wished to guard. Not by the Roman band. They had no inducement. By whom, then, was it taken away? Not by the disciples of our Lord. They neither would, nor could. They would not, for he had been laid there by a friend, and they had no motive to disturb his repose. But suppose that they had desired never so much to take away his body, it was entirely out of their power; for they were a few disheartened ones, and the Roman band was sixty strong. But suppose the disciples had resolved, at all hazards, to take away the

body of their Master; there must have been a struggle. But there is no mention made of this struggle. But, said the chief priest to some of the watch, who came and told what had transpired in the morning, say ye, "his disciples came and stole him away while we slept." Mark!—a guard of sixty soldiers asleep! all asleep! and so profoundly asleep, that the noise necessarily occasioned by the rolling away of a great stone, and the removing of the body, awaked not a single one! Believe this, who can! and yet we are obliged to believe this, or the account given by the Evangelist, for a substantial reason, there is no other. Now, remember, first, the testimony of Mary Magdalene, to whom our Saviour appeared first after his resurrection from the dead; then the testimony of the other women, to whom he also appeared, saying, "All hail!" and next comes the testimony of the two disciples, who saw him while on their way to Emmaus; then the testimony of the eleven, to whom he appeared, as they sat at meat, the door being shut; and, last of all, hear the testimony of the converted Pharisee, who once breathed out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of Christ. I have received of the Lord, says he, that which I also delivered unto you, how that Jesus Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures; that he was

buried, and that he rose from the dead again on the third day, according to the Scriptures; that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve. After that, he was seen of about five hundred brethren at once, the greater part of whom remain unto this present time, but some are fallen asleep. Last of all, he was seen of me, also, as of one born out of due time. Now, consider these witnesses, their number, their credibility, and how they bear united testimony to the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and say, if human testimony can establish any fact, under heaven, is not this fact established? The Lord is risen—is risen indeed! But some present may be ready to say, The speaker has consumed time unnecessarily, in thus entering upon the proof of a fact which we all admit. Now, so far from this being a needless consumption of time, I must beg your indulgence whilst I occupy a little more time upon the same subject; for I deem the matter of great importance, and shall, I hope, make this to appear in a few moments.

Suppose a person, utterly unacquainted with the early history of our beloved country, should arrive at the port of New York on the morning of the 4th of July. Flags are flying, drums are beating, bells are ringing, cannons are firing, the military are parading. Every thing indicates the return of some joyous

day, some grand jubilee. The stranger is astonished. By and by the citizens are seen gathering together in crowds, and wending their way to some splendid edifice. He mingles with the throng, and soon finds himself seated in some spacious hall, tastefully decorated. He looks around upon a "sea of heads"—every eye sparkling, every face dressed in smiles. At a signal given, silence reigns. An individual rises in some conspicuous place, and, holding in his hand a book, reads what is called "The Declaration of Independence." Another follows with a heart-stirring oration. He gives an account of the Revolutionary struggle in strains of thrilling eloquence; he rehearses the achievements of the patriots and heroes of that day; and, in winding up, he apostrophizes the shade of Washington, and, pointing to the star spangled banner leaning upon the wall, exclaims, "Long may it wave over the land of the free, and the home of the brave!" Deafening shouts are heard; martial music strikes up, and, as the crowd, all joyous, retires, suppose the stranger comes up to one who is an American, and says, "Stranger, can you tell me the meaning of all this? Why the waving of so many flags? the ringing of so many bells? the firing of so many cannon? and what means the scene presented in this house?" "O," says the American,

with his cheeks flushed with patriotic feeling, "this is the Fourth of July!" "The Fourth of July! and what do you mean by that?" "Why, sir, I mean that this is the birth-day of our nation's independence!" Now, suppose this foreigner should sneeringly say, "The birth-day of your nation's independence! There is no such thing! You Americans are all gulled! You are a very simple people to believe any such thing. That Declaration of Independence, as you call it, is a forgery, and that oration all a farce. There was never such an historical event as you all pretend to commemorate!"

My brethren, you understand the matter: you know the application I would make.—From the beginning of the world to a certain period, the seventh day of the week was set apart as the weekly Sabbath. From that period, down to the present time, the first day of week has, by the most enlightened nations upon earth, been set apart—to commemorate what?—the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Now, the question is, How could so many nations harmoniously agree to set apart a day to commemorate an event, which event never took place? The thing is impossible. The very existence, then, of the Christian Sabbath, is a standing monument—is proof positive of the fact which it commemorates—

the resurrection of Christ. This is an argument which, we think, cannot be resisted; an argument which will "stand the test of scrutiny, of talents, and of time." Yes, the Lord is risen—is risen indeed! Thank God, our Redeemer slumbers no longer in the tomb! He has triumphed over death! He has triumphed over the grave! The Lord is risen, is risen indeed! Hail to the day that saw him rise! Come to the tomb of Jesus, and mark the proof of his resurrection!

II. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and mark the truth of the Christian religion. This is inseparably connected with the fact of the resurrection of Christ from the dead. Prove the one, and the other follows, as a matter of course. Hence, I have thought it no waste of time, to make the proof of the resurrection of Christ perfectly plain and convincing. This established, we have an argument for the truth of Christianity, which, I humbly conceive, may not be set aside. Let us look at the matter.

It is well known that the Old Testament prophets predicted the resurrection of the Messiah. Our Saviour himself frequently affirmed that he would rise again from the dead, on the third day. Nay, he was willing to rest the proof of his Messiahship upon this very point. Now, then, if Christ be not risen

from the dead, he is not the predicted Messiah, he is not what he declared himself to be—the Son of God, and the only Saviour of the world. But, if he be risen from the dead, as we have so clearly demonstrated, then is he, beyond all doubt, the predicted Messiah, the Son of God, and the only Saviour of the world; and, consequently, the religion which he taught is divinely true. This argument was urged with great force by the apostle Peter, on the day of Pentecost; and it flashed conviction upon three thousand, and was the means of their immediate conversion to Christianity. And we find the apostle Paul laying great stress upon the same thing: indeed, he makes the doctrine of the resurrection of Christ that upon which the truth or falsehood of the Christian religion must depend. Observe his language: "If," says he, "Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain." And again, as if he would wish all to look at this matter, he uses this strong language: "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain: ye are yet in your sins. Then they, also, which have fallen asleep in Christ are perished; but now," continues he, (and his heart kindles at the thought,) "but now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

If there be an unbeliever present, I would

respectfully request him to take home with him the argument for the truth of the Christian religion, drawn from the resurrection of Christ, and I am bold to say he will find it one perfectly convincing, perfectly unanswerable. How thankful should we be, that the truth of our religion is so clear and plain! The glorious superstructure of our faith has many massive pillars to sustain it, but the resurrection of Christ from the dead is the grand central pillar—"the keystone of the arch, which shuts and binds the whole."

Just here, let us for a moment pause, and think—Is the Christian religion true? Then let us remember that there is a God in the heavens, a pure and holy God, whose eye is ever upon us; and that we and this God must meet. Is the Christian religion true? Then let us not forget that we are sinners, and need a Saviour; and that "other foundation can no man lay than is laid, which is Jesus Christ." Is the Christian religion true? Then let us remember that there is a heaven, a world of unspeakable and everlasting joy; and also a hell, a world of unspeakable and everlasting sorrow; and that we are all, this very moment, going towards the one or the other! Is the Christian religion true? Then I appeal to every candid person, is it wise, is it prudent, to neglect the high interests of the soul and

eternity? The Christian religion is true! Sinner, it is time for you to think; and suffer me, just here, to ask, What are your hopes for great eternity?

III. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and contrast his humiliation and his glory. Draw near, and contemplate the blessed Jesus, whilst yet he slumbers in the tomb. Ah! see that sacred form, wrapped in the winding-sheet! Death's leaden sceptre is upon it, and not a solitary ray of divinity beams around it! See those blessed hands of his; the mark of the rugged nails is there. Those blessed feet! There, too, the nails have done their dismal work! Remove that linen, which covers his body—alas! the cruel spear went deep into his side! Take away that napkin about his head—ah me! I see it, my Saviour wore a thorny crown! Look at that blessed countenance, once beaming with benevolence; now how changed in death! That blessed face, once so lovely; now so sadly marred! Alas! those blessed eyes of his are closed now! That blessed tongue of his is still now! That blessed bosom is cold now! O my Redeemer! He lies under the power of death, as one turned over to corruption and the worm! How deep is this humiliation! But wait, this humiliation is only for an appointed time. On the third day he is to rise

again. And now the morning dawns; and lo! the silence of the tomb is broken. The bands of death are bursting! An angel descends from heaven. There is an earthquake. The stone is rolled away from the door of the sepulchre—and the blessed Jesus rises! "And did he rise? And did he rise? Hear it, O ye nations; hear it, O ye dead! He rose! He rose! He burst the bars of death! Then first humanity triumphant passed the crystal gates of life, and seized eternal joy!" Yes, he rose! he rose! He ascended up on high—He led captivity captive—He received gifts for men—He entered the world above.—Lift up your heads, O ye gates; even lift them up, ye everlasting doors, that the King of glory may come in. Lo, now, high in the heavens he is exalted, far above all principality and power; angels gather around him, and all the heavenly host unite to crown him Lord of all!

What a contrast, what an amazing contrast have we here! Once in the sepulchre on earth, now on his throne in the highest heavens! Once wrapped in the winding-sheet; now arrayed in robes of light and glory! Once a prisoner of the grave, and guarded by Roman soldiers; now the Lord of glory, attended by the retinue of the heavenly world! Once under the power of death; now the Prince of life; death's conqueror! leading death and

hell captive, chained to the wheels of his triumphant car. Wondrous Saviour! Surely, one has well said—"To describe the full glories of the Redeemer, requires a new arrangement of letters—a celelestial alphabet, composed of suns and constellations!" Communicants, as in your meditations you cluster around the cross and the tomb of Jesus, do not forget his glory and renown. As you muse upon the words of Him who said, "I am the Good Shepherd, the Good Shepherd giveth up his life for his sheep," don't forget these words, which are also his—"I am he that liveth, and was dead: and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death!"—Blessed Saviour! we will remember thy love! But again,

IV. "Come, see the place where the Saviour lay," and mark the perfection of his sacrifice. When the Redeemer came upon earth, it was upon a specific errand, it was to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. Bowing his head upon the cross, he significantly exclaimed, "It is finished!" And what, I ask, is his resurrection from the dead, but the unequivocal and authentic response of the Everlasting Father—"It is finished!" If the atonement were not complete, God the Father had never sent an angel to roll back the stone from the door of the sepulchre; nor had he

ever sent a cloud, as a chariot, to take his Son home to heaven. The release of the prisoner, then, is proof of the satisfaction of the debt; and his triumphant ascension the crowning evidence of the perfection of his sacrifice. Some persons inquire, Is the atonement limited, or is it general? Did Christ die for all, or only for the elect? To this question I would reply, nearly in the words of Calvin: I believe that the death of Christ is a perfect sacrifice; is of infinite value, and sufficient for the redemption of the whole world; but is effectually applied only to those that believe. The sun in the heavens was made originally for the immediate and special benefit of our first parents. If there were never to be another individual of the human family upon earth, it was necessary that this luminary should be just what it is, to make a perfect day: no additional brightness is necessary to furnish all needful light for unnumbered millions. Hence the language of the Saviour—"God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Thank God! the atonement has been made. All legal obstructions have been taken out of the way; and now the command comes from the Saviour himself—"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; he that believeth and is bap-

tized, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned." Yes, all things are now ready. Come to the wedding: "The Spirit and the bride say, Come. Let him that heareth say, Come. Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

"Salvation! O salvation!
The joyful sound proclaim,
Till earth's remotest nation
Has learned Messiah's name."

V. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and mark the stability of the Divine purposes. Men frequently form, and then change their purposes, or say their purposes remain the same. Many unforeseen events may prevent their accomplishment. Under currents and baffling winds may turn aside the mariner from his destined port. Floods and droughts may defeat the purposes of the planter. Famine or pestilence, fire or the fury of the tempest, may defeat the schemes of the mightiest conquerors. But, believe me, my brethren, no under currents nor baffling winds, no flood, nor drought, nor famine, nor pestilence, nor any thing else can change the plans, or defeat the purposes of Him, who has "prepared his throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all." Observe, it was the purpose of God the Father that Jesus Christ, the Son

of his love, should rise from the dead on the third day. Various efforts were made to defeat this event. When the stone was rolled to the door of the sepulchre, the stone was sealed, and a watch was set, expressly to prevent his rising from the dead. But, O foolish ones! what is the rolling of a stone to the door of the sepulchre, or the setting of a watch, to Him who has all power in heaven and on earth; who need only speak, and worlds on worlds would roll from his creative hand; who need only will it, and all would again sink in fiery ruins! Yes, my brethren, as nothing stops the ocean's tide, or turns aside the bright orb of day; so nothing can stop or turn aside the purposes of Him, who worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. Has he said it, and shall he not do it? Has he commanded, and shall it not stand fast? For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven!

Here, again, let us for a moment pause, and think. Are the purposes of God firm and stable? Then let the impenitent sinner tremble, for according to the Scriptures it is the immutable purpose of an immutable God, that all who die impenitent shall perish; that all who go down to the grave without a Saviour, shall be lost to all eternity! Go, sinner, and stem the ocean's tide; go and roll back the chariot of the sun; and when you have done that,

there is one thing you cannot do—you cannot, dying in sin, you cannot escape the damnation of hell! Dear fellow-sinner, let me entreat you not to make light of this; for the word of the Saviour, touching this matter, has gone forth; and surely you have not forgotten his solemn declaration—Heaven and earth shall pass away, but my words shall not pass away!

Are the purposes of God firm and stable? then may the penitent sinner be encouraged; and all who will come to Christ may have peace and joy in believing; for, according to the Scriptures, it is the immutable purpose of an immutable God, that every one who truly repents shall be forgiven; and every one who comes to Christ, in the exercise of a true and living faith, shall be accepted—shall be saved.

VI. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and contemplate the security of the Church, and the certainty of her ultimate triumph. The Church is now in the midst of enemies, like Daniel in the lion's den, or like a lamb surrounded by ravening wolves; but Zion enjoys her Monarch's love, and glorious things are spoken of the city of our God. According to the Scriptures, God is in the midst of her: God will help her, and that right early. When the Master was laid in the sepulchre, his disciples, cast down and disquieted, were as sheep which had no shepherd. Every thing seemed

dark and discouraging. No doubt they were tempted to fear that the cause of Christ was ruined for ever. O, it was indeed a gloomy and a dark day! but, when the blessed Saviour burst the bars of death, and rose triumphant from the tomb, all was changed! Hope sprang up afresh, and, so to speak, methinks they heard a voice of sweet encouragement, saying, Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Yes, here is encouragement. He who can burst the bars of death, can build up the broken down walls of Zion; and he who can ascend up to heaven, in a cloud, can surely raise his Church to glory and renown. As no power on earth can quench the lights of heaven, or stay the chariot of the rising sun, even so, no power on earth can quench the light of the gospel, or hold in check the hastening triumphs of the Prince of Peace! The Lord is risen, is risen indeed! He has triumphed over all enemies. He has all power in heaven and on earth; and when he sees proper to say to his Church, "Arise and shine," then shall the Church put on her beautiful garments, and look forth as the morning—fair as the morn, clear as the sun, and terrible to her enemies as an army with banners. Once more:

VII. "Come, see the place where the Lord lay," and think of the bright prospects of the

believer, and his hopes beyond the tomb. As Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him, when he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. Very sad and dismal is the change, to mortal eye, which passes upon the body of the believer in the hour of death. The eyes cease to sparkle; the bloom upon the cheek is gone; the features are haggard; the ears are heavy; the tongue is dumb; the heart is cold; the frame is motionless! That countenance, upon which we were wont to gaze, perhaps, with admiration and delight, is now so changed we can scarcely recognize it; and that form, once so lovely, is now wrapped in the winding-sheet, and fit only for the grave, and for the worm! How sad is this change! How deep is this humiliation! But wait, another change is to come: that body is to rise again; those eyes are to sparkle again; an immortal bloom is to be upon that cheek; those features are to have a divine beauty; and that countenance is to be lovely as an angel's! Yes, as the poet says:

> "Arrayed in glorious grace,
> Shall these vile bodies shine,
> And every shape, and every face
> Look heavenly and divine."

"We would not have you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning them which sleep," says the

apostle, "that ye sorrow not as others which have no hope; for, as Jesus died and rose again, even so, them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him; for the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel and the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first." They shall rise in beauty and splendour. They shall leave their dusty beds, and appear as angels coming out of the ground! Yea, they shall rise in the likeness of the Son of God. For thus teaches the apostle:—"Our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall change our vile body, that it may be fashioned like unto his glorious body, according to the working whereby he is able even to subdue all things unto himself." O how wonderful is this! and how cheering to those who have looked, in sadness and grief, upon the pale, cold, and motionless form of some beloved one, who has fallen asleep in Jesus. Has this dear friend fallen under the power of death? And was not even the great Redeemer himself once under the power of death? Did you see the loved form of your friend wrapped in the winding-sheet, and laid in the grave? And was not the body of your Lord also thus arrayed, and laid in a tomb? Ah! my brethren, this has sanctified death, and the

winding-sheet, and the grave. If Jesus died, why should we not be willing to die? And if he was laid in the tomb, why should we not be willing to have the same bed of repose?

"The graves of all his saints he bless'd,
And softened every bed,
Where should the dying members rest
But with their dying Head?"

I must say, my dear brethren, that this association of the tomb of Jesus, is to me one of a peculiarly sacred and pleasing character. It does much to strip death of its sting, and the grave of its terror. Shall the servant be greater than his Master? Shall not the disciple, in this particular, be willing to be as his Lord? and, especially, as he is to share with his Master in the triumphs of a glorious resurrection. It is enough! Amen. So let it be!—

"I would not live alway; no, welcome the tomb,
Since Jesus hath lain there, I dread not its gloom;
Then, sweet be my rest, till he bid me arise
To hail him in triumph, descending the skies!"

Blessed be God! the Lord is risen—is risen indeed! Come, see the place where the Lord lay!

SERMON X.

CHRISTIAN MORALITY.

Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.—PHILIPPIANS iv. 8.

TRUE religion, unquestionably, elevates and improves the human character; gives it a mingled sweetness and dignity, a perfection and excellence, which nothing else possibly can. Great talents and heroic achievements may add splendour to a name, may secure the admiration of a world. But, after all, "'Tis moral grandeur which makes the man." And what is moral grandeur? What gives it beauty and charm, and body, and soul, but true religion? This is the sum and perfection of whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report. Look at our blessed Redeemer: no laurels of the conqueror encircled his brow; no triumphal arches commemorated his victories; and yet, even as a man, Jesus Christ stands first on the rolls of fame! And wherefore? Not merely because he spake as never man spake; not merely because he wrought stupendous miracles:—No, nor even because of this and that distinguished trait of moral character, but

it was because of the assemblage of all virtues; because of the clustering of all graces;—it was because of the finished beauty of his whole character; for in him, as one well observes, was "all light, without a shade; all beauty without a spot." Now, such as our Saviour was, in all his imitable perfections, should we be. The standard is high—I know it—it is exceeding high, but it is good for us to have a high standard, that we may be thoroughly sensible of our own short-comings, and convinced that we do need a better righteousness than our own, and must have it, or where God is, we cannot come—where heaven is, we cannot dwell. And now, I wish to lay before you, for your serious consideration, the points of Christian morality presented in our text. "Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."

I. "Whatsoever things are true."—Truth is a cardinal virtue, and like the name of the ever-blessed God, it is most sacred, and must in no form or fashion be trifled with. Truth has reference to two things—veracity and faithfulness. By veracity, I mean the speaking as we think, and feel, and desire; and by faithful-

ness, the squaring of our words by our actions. Veracity is necessary to social intercourse. If it be trampled upon, distrust and suspicion would invade every bosom; the whole frame and texture of the social system would be deranged, would be dissolved. Veracity is essential to a good character; no matter what a man's reputation or standing in other respects may be, if he be not a man of strict and undeviating veracity, there is a foul stain upon that man's character, which, like the blood of the murdered man upon the floor, (as it is fabled) nothing can wash out. Moreover, veracity is requisite in order to our admittance into the world above. "Nothing," says Paul, "that worketh abomination, or maketh a lie, shall ever enter there." Now, let all seriously think upon these things, who practice deceptions of any kind; those, for example, who indulge in flattery, as well as those who deal in slander. Those who make hollow-hearted professions of friendship, as well as those who bear false witness against their neighbour; those also who colour narratives, and exaggerate matters of fact, as well as those who tell wilful and downright falsehoods: in short, let all seriously think upon these things, who, whether for amusement trifle with truth, or for baser purposes, they trample it under their feet! And here I will just in a passing way

advert to a practice, which prevails in some of our Atlantic cities, but whether in this region of country, I know not—the practice of masters and mistresses directing their servants to say that they are not at home, when at home they are! Whatsoever things are true, says our text; think on these things.

And now, let us see if we may not find a spot, and a very dark spot, too, where nothing of the kind was anticipated; I mean, upon the escutcheon of the moral man, so called. What are we to understand by veracity? The speaking as we think, and believe, and feel, and desire. Well, this moral man, so called, makes confession of sins committed, and there is no contrition in his soul. He makes acknowledgment for mercies received, and there is no gratitude in his heart. He prays, like Augustine of old, to be delivered from certain besetting sins, and, like the same Augustine, he is afraid that God will take him at his word, for he really does not wish to be delivered from those sins. Now, this man is wanting in the very matter of veracity, and yet he esteems himself a very moral man. But, let us see if we may not find another spot on the moral character of the same man. Take this case:—He is in the sanctuary. The minister reasons well concerning "righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come;" he

brings the high claims of God and eternity to bear strongly upon the understanding, and the conscience, and the hearts of his hearers; this man's attention is arrested; his conscience is troubled; pungent conviction seizes upon him; he feels that he is a sinner; he feels that he is exposed to wrath divine; he trembles, like Felix, and, like Agrippa, he is almost persuaded to be a Christian. Now, mark! Just in this frame of mind—really anxious in relation to his eternal interests—the services close, and, as he retires, he meets with some gay associate, and fearing lest that associate might think the sermon had made an impression upon his mind, he assumes an air of indifference, makes some witty remark, and forces a smile! O the hypocrite! My brethren, believe me, there are hypocrites out of the Church, as well as in the Church; and many of these moral men, so called, are not so very moral after all.

But truth, as we have said, has reference not only to veracity, but to faithfulness—the squaring of our words by our actions. And here, it must be confessed, that there are persons in this world of whom we might have expected better things, who are strangely, marvellously wanting just in this thing. They make promises, they enter into engagements—and break their word! At such a time, this

bill shall be paid; at such a time, this work shall be done; at such a time, this business shall certainly be attended to:—confidence is reposed, and, to the serious annoyance of another, they break their word, they violate their engagements; and this they will do, over and over again; and yet such have the effrontery to call themselves moral men! O shame, where is thy blush? If you should know of a professor of religion guilty in this matter, I have one request to make: "Tell it not in Gath; publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised rejoice; lest the daughters of the Philistines triumph!" O tell it not to the man that "mouths the heavens," nor to him who "reels o'er the full bowl;" and, especially, tell it not to the mere moralist, lest sinners, through all their tribes and gradations, should scornfully curl the lip, and, pointing to every member of the Church, should sneeringly say: "And what do ye more than others?" I am aware that sometimes promises are made, and unforeseen events place it out of the power of the person giving the promise to keep it. In such cases, all candid and reasonable persons are ready to make all due allowance; but there are cases where a promise is made, and that is the last of it! This is a sore evil under the sun; and if it be a professor of religion who is

guilty in this matter, be it known that he brings a reproach upon the religion of Christ; he does much to block up the pathway to heaven against those around. Let every man, and especially every professor of religion, bear distinctly in mind, that his word is his bond, and that truth, as we have said, like the name of the ever-blessed God, is most sacred, and must in no form or fashion be trifled with. But, let us again examine, and see if we may not find yet another spot upon the escutcheon of the moral man, so called. If we are to believe him, he never breaks his word. He would scorn to do such a thing! Now, let us draw aside the curtain, and tell you a little of the secret history of that man. He was laid upon a bed of sickness on a certain occasion. A physician was sent for in haste. The physician came, felt his pulse, looked very gravely, and prescribed strong remedies. The patient was alarmed, thought himself in great danger; and knowing well that he was not prepared to meet his Maker, he begged a friend to pray for him. He did more than this; he made a promise—he made a solemn vow to his Maker, that if his life was spared he would devote his remaining days to the service of God. Well, his life was spared. Within a few weeks he was restored to good health again. Shall I tell you what that man did?

He violated his promise; he broke his vow; he lied!—not unto men, but unto God! When the speaker said that such a man lied, you thought him rather harsh and rough in his language; but, when he added, "Not unto men, but unto God," he softened the phrase. And is it come to this? To lie to a fellow-creature is a serious affair; but to lie unto God is a small matter! O when will men view things in their true light! and when will the moral man, so called, understand, that when weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, he is found wanting!

II. "Whatsoever things are honest"—*semna*, in the original; which means, that which is worthy of respect and veneration. The Christian religion, presenting an upright course of moral conduct, based upon sound and evangelical principles, commends itself to every man's judgment, whether he be righteous or wicked. For example, let a man of sterling worth, of consistent Christian character, be unexpectedly thrown into the company of the intemperate or profane, and much mistaken am I, if we do not immediately see the commanding influence of that man's dignity of character:

"So spake the cherub:——
——Abashed the devil stood,
And felt how awful goodness is—felt,
And pined his loss."——

"Let no man despise thee," said Paul to Titus; that is, so live, that no man can despise thee. Maintain the dignity and consistency of the Christian character in all companies, in all circumstances. Be always ready to say, by word and deed, "I am a Christian," and, "I am not ashamed to own my Lord." Christian dignity! that will ever command respect. But think not that dignity and pride are the same thing. They are widely different. Our Saviour maintained the dignity of a master at the very time that he washed his disciples' feet. "Whatsoever things are honest"—*semna*—worthy of respect or veneration, "think on these things."

III. "Whatsoever things are just."—Here the apostle brings to view, and recommends another cardinal virtue—justice; and by justice I mean a disposition to respect all rights, a disposition to meet all claims, which are well founded. It is a very comprehensive principle, and will serve to regulate our conduct, not only in commercial and pecuniary matters, but also in matters of every kind. If, for example, I have a just claim to a person's gratitude, or respect, or service, my claim is just as binding upon him, as if it had reference to his person, or to his estate. And now, see how very defective some persons are who have a very good opinion of themselves. This

proud man will not cheat the poor, but he will trample them under foot. It is to render to all their dues. This is what Peter says. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute, fear to whom fear, honour to whom honour—and this falls in with the language of our blessed Saviour: Whatsoever ye would that others do unto you, do ye the same unto them likewise. This golden precept or rule, was so much admired by the emperor Alexander Severus, that he inscribed it upon his closet, quoted it in his judgments, and for the sake of it, honoured Christ and favoured his followers; and if so much admired by a pagan Roman emperor, how much more ought it to be admired and practised by those who have formally subscribed to the heavenly and sublime morality of the Son of God; and yet, how is the principle, as we have already intimated, treated with perfect disregard! This reckless slanderer will not rob his neighbour of his purse, but he will rob him of his character. This vile ingrate will repay money borrowed, but he will withhold gratitude that is due. This outrageous husband will grant pecuniary support to his wife, but by his harshness, his unkindness, his neglect, he will break her heart. Is this according to the golden rule? or is this "to render to all their dues?"

And now, what if I prove that no unconverted sinner is a just or morally honest man? I did not affirm it—I only said, what if I proved it. I will state a case; judge ye, you have an understanding as well as the speaker. Here is an individual—A. and B. we will suppose, have claims against him, equally well founded. A. has a claim for one hundred dollars, B. for one thousand. The individual referred to likes Mr. A., but does not like Mr. B. Well, Mr. A. presents his claim. "O, certainly, sir," says the individual, and taking out his pocket-book, he settles the claim to the smallest fraction. Very well, good as far as it goes. But when A. retires, here comes Mr. B. and presents his claim, and we will suppose that the said individual has no disposition to meet the claims of B., but is disposed to put him off as long as possible. Is this debtor a just, or morally honest man? I think not; for what is justice, or moral honesty? Is it not a disposition to respect all rights—a disposition to meet all claims well founded? But, according to the supposition made, the individual spoken of has a disposition to meet the claims of A. but no disposition to meet the claims of B.; certainly he is not a just, or morally honest man! Now, let A. represent man, and B. the ever-blessed God. The moral man, so

called, is willing to meet and settle the claims of his fellow creatures. But when the claims of God are presented, these claims are not respected; the unrenewed sinner has no disposition to meet them, but is disposed to put them off as long as possible, saying, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season, I will call for thee." Is this a just, or morally honest man? And now see the moral man, so called, like the eagle, soaring aloft, and smitten in mid-heavens, he comes lumbering down to the ground, all his pride and plumage laid low in the dust! I tell you the truth, my brethren, I lie not; these mere moralists are "weighed in the balance and found wanting!" Only let them go into the eternal world with no better righteousness than that, and, mark my word, where God is they cannot come; where heaven is they can never dwell. Yes, these moral men must perish! Mistake me not. I am not crying down morality. Heaven forbid! But if by scriptural and common sense argument I can show, that the most amiable, and the very best of the unconverted are weighed and found wanting, how certain is the perdition of those who do not even come up to their mark! How important it is to have a better righteousness than our own; for, "by the deeds of the law shall no flesh living be justified."

IV. "Whatsoever things are pure."—The Christian religion would not only regulate our outward conduct, but would lay its hand upon the springs of action, and would control the whole moral man. It would have us to be pure in our motives, pure in our principles, pure in all our thoughts and imaginations, pure in our hearts—as it is written, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God." Now, if there be a single individual present who bases his hopes of heaven upon the excellence of his moral character, I would ask him a question or two. Are you pure within? No evil thoughts? no evil feelings? no evil desires? Ah! believe me, the heart of the best man on earth is defiled with sin: yea, according to the prophet, is "deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Hence the strong language of Isaiah: "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." What an idea this is! and how effectually does it destroy the hopes of the unregenerate man! I suppose a more virtuous man never lived than the prophet Isaiah; and yet he hesitated not to say, that all his personal righteousness was only as "filthy rags." Now in connection with this, take this idea:—Heaven is a place of unsullied purity. The angels are robed in spotless white. The spirits of the just are also robed in white. They have not, it is true, the

white robes of innocence, such as angels wear, but robes equally beautiful and white—robes "washed and made white in the blood of the Lamb." Now, only think, this man attempts to enter the gates of heaven having no better righteousness than his own—that is, he attempts to enter, clothed in rags, in filthy rags! Will he be permitted to enter? I suspect not! Ah! my hearers, believe me, we must have a better righteousness than our own; and verily, without the washing of regeneration, and the renewing of the Holy Ghost, we can never, never enter into the heavenly world; for thus saith the glorious Son of God, "Ye must be born again." Yes,

> "Our nature's totally depraved,
> The heart a sink of sin,
> Without a change, we can't be saved,
> We must be born again."

Immortal man! Think upon these things, make no mistake. If a man dies, can he live again? Once lost, lost for ever!

V. "Whatsoever things are lovely."—There are certain things which give a beauty and a charm, a finish to the character, and these things we are to think upon and show forth in our whole lives and conversation. Among these things which are "lovely," I would mention a sweet and even temper, mild and

unassuming manners, a courteous and polite behaviour, kind feelings, a generous heart, a sympathizing spirit—that which leads its possessor not only to rejoice with those that rejoice, but to weep with those that weep. And here let me lay before you some of these "lovely things," in all the charms of a tangible exemplification. I have seen the young man, of brilliant talents, rising up and showing respect to the man of silvery locks—youth bending before age. This was lovely. I have seen the maiden, of many charms, in the sabbath-school room, with her interesting charge around her, whilst she was engaged in a work which the angels of God themselves might delight in. This was lovely. I have seen husbands who loved their wives and were not bitter against them; and, I have seen wives who were careful to render to their husbands the obedience of love; this, too, was lovely. I have seen parents who watched over their children with Christian anxiety, guarding their morals, with all care, anxious to promote their spiritual as well as temporal prosperity. Yea, I have seen them anxious to "allure to brighter worlds, and lead the way:" and I have seen children—both sons and daughters, very affectionate and respectful to their aged parents—consulting their wishes, anticipating their wants, endeavouring to strew

their pathway with flowers, and cheer them in the evening of their days. This was lovely. I have seen brothers and sisters remarkably kind and affectionate to each other. They had no jarrings, indulged in no petty contradictions. They really loved each other, and desired to make each other happy. It was a lovely sight; like the family of Martha and Mary, and Lazarus, each of whom Jesus loved; yes, it was lovely a sight—a little type of heaven! I have seen masters who were careful to give unto their servants that which was just and equal, knowing that they had also a Master in heaven; and I have seen servants who were very conscientious in obeying their masters, as required to do in the sacred volume. I have seen the faithful pastor, in the midst of the people of his charge, as a father in the midst of his family, every member of which was dear to his heart: and I have seen a whole congregation, who were always respectful and kind to their pastor; received him into their dwellings with a smile; heeded his counsels and instructions, and neglected not his temporal wants.—I have dwelt the longer on such things, for two reasons: first, because such matters are too rarely adverted to in the pulpit; and secondly, because some professors of religion are not as consistent and lowly as they should be. Of Naaman, it was said, "Now

Naaman, captain of the host of the king of Syria, was a great man with his master, and honourable, because that by him the Lord had granted deliverance unto Syria; moreover, he was a mighty man in valour, but he was a leper." So it is with many around us; they have some fine traits of character, have many excellencies, but alas! poor human nature, they have some sad imperfections. I saw a talented minister of the gospel once:—he was zealous and active, and he was instrumental in doing much good, but I thought he was rather domineering and dictatorial. Alas! poor human nature! I saw another, he was not domineering or dictatorial. No! he was a gentle spirit; he had much of the milk of human kindness, but I thought he was not zealous as a minister; he was not earnest as a preacher; he was rather cold, I thought, rather inclined to *snowing* upon the people. His words were very beautiful, but it seemed to me they were more like flakes of snow falling from his lips, than nails and goads, as they should have been. I saw another minister of the gospel; he was a young man, really eloquent and interesting, as a preacher, but I thought he was rather too fond of being nursed; moreover, some persons thought he was somewhat spiced with vanity. I saw an elder of the church; he was a prominent man, a man of some standing and influ-

ence; but I thought he was rather covetous and worldly-minded. His subscriptions to religious and benevolent objects were not up to his means. I saw another; he was not covetous—no; he was a generous hearted man, he had a large soul, and seemed never to forget the words of the Master, "It is more blessed to give than to receive;" but I thought he was hasty in his temper. Perhaps his mother had never taught him that "He that is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh a city." I saw another member of the church; he was not hasty in his temper, he was not easily ruffled in his temper, but he was sadly inefficient; he did nothing to cause his influence to be felt; he was quite an amiable man, but in the church he was much of a cipher, and a drone. I saw a mother in Israel; she was an active member of the church, and was something of a Dorcas, moreover, her house was the ministers' hotel, she was very hospitable, but at times she was rather fretful and censorious, and would occasionally speak rather too freely about her neighbours. And I saw yet another female member of the church; she was lively and pleasant; had some fine traits of character, but she was rather fond of finery and parade; perhaps she had overlooked what the apostle James said about good works being

a better adornment for a daughter of Zion than gold, or pearls, or costly array.

My pictures are not entirely fanciful; they are drawn from real life. Alas, poor human nature! Some persons have many things to recommend them; but there are some sad drawbacks. Indeed, there are some, who, although members of the Church, are by no means consistent members—and some are even positively unamiable. They think upon whatsoever things are true, and honest, and just, and pure, but they seem to forget that the apostle adds, "whatsoever things are lovely." They are not lovely in their temper and spirit, they are not lovely in their manners: some are morose, and peevish, and fretful. Some are too uncharitable, and some too easily offended; and some, again, are too penurious. They are selfish, and seem to live for themselves alone. They do not "adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour." They rather bring a reproach upon the religion which they profess. They cause "the way of truth to be evil spoken of," and confirm sinners in their wicked ways. I recollect a gentlemen once made this remark to me, "Sir, my wife is a member of the Church; as for myself, I make no pretensions to religion; and yet, to tell you the truth, I must say I think my wife is just as peevish, and fretful, and worldly-minded as I

am!" Daughter of Zion! beware how you give your husband any just cause to make a remark of this kind. Remember you are to win him to Christ by a "chaste conversation, coupled with fear." "Whatsoever things are lovely—think on these things." O, that all who have named the name of Christ would aim at being consistent Christians, and then would the most scornful see that true religion does indeed elevate and improve the human character; that it does indeed come to make better husbands and better wives, better parents and better children, better masters and better servants. What a powerful argument would this be for the truth of the Christian religion!

"So let our lips and lives express,
The holy gospel we profess;
So let our works and virtues shine,
To prove the doctrine all divine."

One item more:

VI. "Whatsoever things are of good report."—There are certain things of which all persons approve, whether rich or poor, learned or unlearned, righteous or wicked. Permit me to mention some of these things, and cordially recommend them to your serious regard. First: Uniformity is of good report. The changeling in sentiment or conduct, nobody respects; for it seems that he wants

judgment to form an opinion, or, forming an opinion, he wants firmness to maintain it. He that is our friend to-day, and our enemy to-morrow; one thing at this time, and quite another at another time—who can respect such a one? No! we all like the man, who, amid all the scenes of life, "holds on the even tenor of his way," presenting an humble imitation of Him, of whom it is said, "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever." My brethren, be uniform. Be not carried about by diverse winds of doctrines. Be not of the number of those who are fickle-minded, and given to change. Be consistent and firm. Another thing of good report is catholicism. I use this word for want of a better. By catholicism, I mean the opposite of a narrow, contracted, bigoted, sectarian spirit; a spirit which, whilst it would lead its possessor most earnestly to "contend for the faith once delivered to the saints," would by no means lead him to confine all the sweet charities of his religion to one sect or denomination. Some persons can see nothing good except in their own particular church. In this matter their views are very limited—like the "fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads an inch around!" If their church is prospering, they think that the millennium is just at hand! if their church is declining, they think, surely, all religion is

dying out! This spirit is unworthy of an enlightened Christian. No! we like the man who has elevated and expanded views, who looks upon the Church of Christ as a fruit-bearing tree, that has many branches, each bearing at least some good fruit; or, like the grand army of patriots and volunteers in time of war—one army, and yet composed of different companies, and fighting under one and the same banner. If I ever were a bigoted sectarian in my feelings, I have been cured, and the process was a simple one. I heard of a death: "How did the man die?" "O," says the messenger, "I never witnessed such a death before! It really seemed as if the room was filled with the angels of God!" "Did he die in his senses?" "Perfectly in his senses." "Did he speak?" "Yes, sir, and until his voice was lost in death!" "About what did he speak?" "About the blessed Jesus, sir. I heard him frequently say, 'Precious Saviour! precious Saviour!' and, just as he was breathing his last, he looked up, and, with a countenance radiant with joy, he exclaimed, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!' Saying this, he closed his eyes, and his spirit took its upward flight." "Well, truly, that was a happy death! and who was he?" "He was a *Presbyterian.*" Very well, and shall I not love those of my own communion, seeing God loves them? But

I heard of another death. "How did he die?" "O, sir, it was truly a happy death." "Did he speak?" "Yes, sir, and brought us all to tears." "And what did he say?" "O, sir, he said a great many beautiful things; but his last words were these,

'Jesus can make a dying bed
Feel soft as downy pillows are.'"

"Well, that certainly was a happy death. And he was a Presbyterian—was he not?" "No, sir." "Not a Presbyterian!" "What, then?" "He was a Baptist." "A *Baptist!* Is it possible! Very well: be it so. If my Heavenly Father showers the roses of heaven upon the bed of the dying Baptist, and takes him as a child home to glory, this is my brother in Christ: I hope to meet him in heaven!" I heard of yet another death! "Was it happy?" "Most happy." "Did he speak?" "Yes, sir. There were a great many in the room around his dying bed;—and he took each one by the hand, and gave the parting charge to meet him in heaven. All at once a sweet smile came over his countenance. He looked up, and seemed to be gazing with rapture upon some heavenly object, and exclaimed, 'Glory! glory!'—and then we heard him in a whisper say, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!' Saying this, his head sank

upon the pillow; and we all remarked that we never saw a more lovely corpse." "Certainly that was a happy death! Was he not a Presbyterian?" "No." "Then, surely, he must have been a *Baptist?*" "No, he was not!" "What then?" "He was a *Methodist.*" "A Methodist!—Very well. If God accepts him, so will I. If my Heavenly Father sends down Elijah's triumphant chariot to take this dying Methodist to heaven; he, also, is my brother; we are bought with the same precious blood; we are sanctified by the same Divine Spirit; we are members of the same household of faith; I hope to shake hands with him in glory, and there unite with him in one sweet and everlasting song—'the song of Moses and the Lamb!' 'Grace be with all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity.' "

"The saints on earth, and all the dead,
But one communion make;
All join in Christ, their living Head,
And of his grace partake."

"Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Amen."

SERMON XI.

A SERMON TO YOUNG MEN.

And thou, Solomon my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind: for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee; but if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever.—1 CHRON. xxviii. 9.

THESE words form a part of David's farewell address, or dying charge, to Solomon, his son, and heir of his throne. Notwithstanding his many and acknowledged faults, David was, upon the whole, both a great and a good man. He was a great man, for he had risen from obscurity to distinction; from being a shepherd boy to be a king, and a powerful one. But he was also a good man. Not to mention other things, the book of Psalms, chiefly penned by him, is a memorial to his praise; a monument more beautiful than marble, more enduring than brass. And what, my young friends, I wish you not to forget, is this, that he devoted the morning of his days, as well as all his subsequent life, to the service of his Maker. Yes, piety adorned his youth; it flourished in manhood; and was to him a crown of glory in his old age. And now, having reigned over Jerusalem forty years, and knowing that the time of his departure was

near at hand, like Jacob, the venerable patriarch, and Moses, the saint of God, and Joshua, the son of Nun, he devotes the last closing scene of his life to the cause of piety and of God, and in his case emphatically, most lovely was the closing scene; lovelier far than the sunset scene at the close of the most placid day. See the mild, bright sun, sinking in the west, painting with rosy colours the fleecy clouds, which, here and there, are seen reposing upon the bosom of the clear blue sky. It is a beauteous, a lovely sight, and one upon which the eye loves to linger; but the last, closing scene in the history of a good man, when his sun of life is sinking in mild splendour to rise in more effulgent glory in another and a better world, has a beauty and a loveliness peculiarly its own. One has said,

"The chamber where the good man meets his fate,
Is privileged, beyond the common walks of virtuous life,
Quite on the verge of heaven!"

Does he speak? Every eye is fixed; every ear is attentive; all around are anxious to catch the last words which fall from his quivering lips; they are received as the counsels of wisdom and experience—almost as the voice of an oracle, or angel of God. But the case before us is invested with peculiar interest, for it is not only a good man that is about to leave the world, but it is a great man, a

mighty man, a warrior, a conqueror, and a king. This is he, who, even when a youth, was more lauded than Saul, what time returning as the vanquisher of Goliah, he was met by those who, with the timbrel and the dance, uttered his praises, saying, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his tens of thousands!" Yes, it is the far renowned David, the king of Israel, that is about to sink into the cold embrace of death. After the example of other Old Testament worthies who had gone before him, he gives his farewell address, he gives his dying charge. Picture to yourself the scene; the chief men of Jerusalem, and the mighty men, and the princes of the blood, are assembled in the palace of the dying monarch. There, on his royal couch, is the venerable man, with his cheeks furrowed, and his locks silvery with age! and there stands that young man, Solomon, his son, in youthful bloom; Solomon, the heir of David's throne. What silence reigns! And now the king speaks; first he addresses the nobles of his court, giving them political counsel; and then he turns his eyes upon Solomon, and upon him, now, every eye is fixed. Solomon, with profound veneration waits to hear his father's charge. It falls upon his ear: "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a per-

fect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever!" How unexpected is this language! How widely different from what the nobles around, and no doubt, from what Solomon himself anticipated. Certainly he will make a charge such as might be looked for from the mouth of a dying warrior and a king. No doubt he will speak after this fashion:—Solomon, your father rose from obscurity to distinction—from being a shepherd boy to be a king. Your father has fought many battles, achieved many victories; Solomon, you are to succeed your father upon the throne; cherish a martial spirit, push forward your victories, enlarge your dominions, twine laurels around your brow, and thus add new splendours to David's throne. No! not a word of this kind is uttered. What does he say? Let us hear it again: "And thou, Solomon, my son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts; if thou seek him he will be found of thee, but if thou forsake him he will cast thee off for ever!" Ah! my young friends—ye young men whose hearts

are set upon the world, and the things of the world; ye who are pressing after the riches of the world, and the honours of the world, and the pleasures of the world, here you may see how these things appear in a dying hour, how they are viewed even by a dying warrior and a king. Riches are nothing—honour, fame, all worldly splendour, all worldly glory—nothing. Religion looms up then. The favour of God, that is everything; all else fades away like twinkling stars before the rising sun. And how was this great truth confirmed by Solomon himself too, when the hour of his departure drew near. You recollect his language, "Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." And again: Let us hear, says he, the conclusion of the whole matter:—"Fear God and keep his commadments, for this is the whole duty of man, for God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil." Believe me, young men, the time is coming when these views will be our views. God grant we may all be prepared for that hour!

There are duties and considerations presented in our text, which claim the attention of all, but particularly of young men.

I. Duties.—They are expressed in these words: "My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart and

with a willing mind." First, "know thou the God of thy father." Taking it for granted that your parents are pious, see to it that you walk in their footsteps. The counsel of Eliphaz is good counsel: "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace with him, thereby good shall come unto you." Some of you, doubtless, covet knowledge of some kind or other; some of you wish to know how you can get riches, how you can secure fame; how you can multiply friends; how you can enjoy and prolong life. Believe me, there is a kind of knowledge better than all this. "My son, know thou the God of thy father." And why should you seek to know him? Because he is the only living and true God. He is your Creator, the source of your being; he is your Preserver; his hand is underneath and around you; it is in him that you live, and move, and have your being. He is your Benefactor; to him you are indebted for every comfort, every enjoyment, every breath; and he is your final Judge—you and God must meet, and it would be well for you to know who he is, and what he is, before you are called into his presence. You should know him, not as your fancy portrays him, but as the Bible reveals him; as a God, not only good, but just; not only merciful, but holy; a God, not only long-suffering, but who will by no means clear

the guilty: in short, you are to know him in all the beauty, and harmony, and perfection of his whole character. O think, how great and glorious a being He is! and how happy are those who have him for their friend and protector! How happy are those who, in the exercise of the spirit of adoption, can address him in this beautiful language: "Abba, Father!" and who, after contemplating his power and grandeur can say, with holy joy and exultation, "This God is our God, for ever and ever, He will be our guide, even unto death!" But, you are not only to know God; you are, secondly, to serve him. What avails knowledge, if it does not prompt to obedience? You respect your father's friend, why not serve your father's God? Do you ask what you are to do? You are in the first place to give him your heart. This is expressly commanded, as it is written in the book of Proverbs, "My son, give me thine heart;" and this is implied in this language of our text, "serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind." Yes, your heart must be yielded up; "you must love the Lord your God with all your heart;" you must love him more than you love father, or mother, or brother, or sister; more than you love your property, or your sins, or your life. Ah! this is the main thing required—the heart; the seat of

the affections; let this be right, and all will be right; for love is an all controlling principle.

> "'Tis love which makes our willing feet,
> In swift obedience move;
> The devils know and tremble too;
> But Satan cannot love."

But, just here, I wish to remind you of certain things, which must not be forgotten. First: You must serve some master or other. "What," says the apostle, "know ye not that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are whom ye obey?" And what says our Saviour? "He that committeth sin is the servant of sin." My second remark is this: "You cannot serve two masters." This is what our Saviour, also, expressly affirms: "No man," says he, "can serve two masters." And again: "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon." These things being so, let it be remembered that the two masters who claim your service, are *God* and the *world*, and you must have one or the other; and, using the language of Joshua, I would say, "Choose you, this day, whom you will serve." Now, if this choice were left to your pious mother, or to your pious sister, or to the dying Christian, or to the heavenly ones in glory, the choice would soon be made, and I am sure it would be a wise choice, and one which you

would never regret. But no one is permitted to choose for you; each of you must make your own choice; and I would advise you to act discreetly in this matter, for the choice which you now make may be ratified in heaven, and settled upon you for ever. Have you a regard for the matter of justice? I hope you have. Then, sit in judgment upon the claims of these two masters; whose claims are the best, God or the world? You know very well that the claims of your Maker are the best, infinitely the best. Then choose accordingly. And have you a regard for your own happiness? Then sit in judgment upon the character of these two masters—which is the best master? One is good, the other is bad. One is the very kindest of all masters. He will require nothing of you but what is perfectly reasonable; nothing but what is directly calculated to promote your best interests, and your true happiness; moreover, he will be kind to you in the hour of affliction, and will not forsake you in the hour of death: nay, more, he will finally take you to heaven, and make you happy there, unspeakably happy, and happy for ever. With regard to the other master, the world, or the devil, is he a kind master? This master is of all others the worst. He is a cruel master, a tyrant! His requirements are oftentimes most unreason-

able, and he cares not for the interest nor the happiness of his servants; not unfrequently he will require what is opposed to principle and conscience. I will give an example. Alexander Hamilton was challenged by Aaron Burr to fight a duel. This method of settling disputes was not in accordance with the feelings or judgment of General Hamilton; nay, it was in direct opposition to his principles and conscience. He left this upon record. I have read what may be termed his written protest. The amount of what he wrote was this: that he did not approve of duelling, that it was abhorrent to all his feelings; that it was against his principles and conscience: but, he added, "the world expects it; the world demands it, and therefore I must accept the challenge." And he did accept it, and did fight; and sad to tell, he fell! was suddenly snatched from his family, and laid in an untimely grave. And now, listen to the colloquy between the master and the servant, in such a case. "Fight the duel," says this stern master. "It is against my conscience," replies the servant. "Who cares for your conscience? Fight the duel!" "Well, but my master, I have a lovely wife; she is the jewel of my heart; and if I should fall in single combat, she could not survive it, she would go down broken-hearted to the

grave." "And what of that? Let your wife go down broken-hearted to the grave! Who cares for your wife? Fight the duel, I command you!" "But, my master, I have a number of dear children; they are young and tender, and as yet unprovided for; and if I should at this time be cut off, they may be thrown upon the cold charities of an unfeeling world; they may even become paupers, and how can I bear to think of the evil that must come upon them?" "Who cares for your children? what if they become paupers, and even vagabonds? who cares for that? Fight the duel, I again command you!" "But, O my hard master, listen to me. My mother taught me, that after death comes the judgment. I am not prepared to die, and if I should be slain in this combat, I fear that my poor soul may be lost, may be damned to all eternity." "And, pray, who cares for your soul? who cares if your soul should be lost and damned to all eternity? I care not; that is a very small matter. Fight the duel, I command you!—fight the duel!" O what a cruel master this is! What a tyrant! He has no regard for your principles, or feelings, or conscience; no, nor even for the salvation of your soul. And is this the master of your choice? Are you willing to wear his iron

yoke? Well, when you are crushed and ruined, whom will you have to blame, but yourself? O how you will reproach yourself! How you will charge yourself with madness and folly, in rejecting the kindest of all masters, and preferring one who is a hard, unfeeling and cruel tyrant! Remember, if you make a bad choice, you yourself must suffer for it: and I would now say to you, as Paul did to the Philippian jailor, who drew his sword and would have killed himself, "Do thyself no harm." "My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him." Take his yoke upon you, it is not galling, it is easy; take his burden upon you, it is not heavy, it is light. Yes, his service is a reasonable service, it is perfect freedom. This choice, you will never repent. Believe me, the ways of wisdom are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. Believe me, or rather believe Him who cannot lie—"Godliness is profitable unto all things, having promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come." Have you made this choice in your own heart? Then, in the next place make an open avowal, a public profession of it; yes, come out from the world, take your stand openly upon the Lord's side. Let your conduct speak this language,

"I'm not ashamed to own my Lord,
Nor to defend his cause."

Have moral courage. Be willing that the whole world shall know that you are a Christian, that you are a disciple of the Lord Jesus; and that, God helping you, you are determined to serve him faithfully till you die. Consecrate to his service your time, your talents, your property, your influence, your all. Let your language be the language of the converted soul, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" And if any of you be called to serve him in the ministry of the word, yield promptly; yield cheerfully, and say with Isaiah, "Here am I, Lord, send me." But, if not called to preach the gospel, be sure, that in whatever station you may be placed, the full weight of your influence shall be on the side of religion and morality.

And here permit me to say a few things on the subject of temperance. In the present state of things it is called for. Young men, with your own eyes you have seen the evils of intemperance. Perhaps some of your own acquaintances; perhaps some of your own companions, have fallen victims to this vice. O, who can tell how great an evil it is! Who can tell what mischief it has done! We have heard of wars, which have laid cities in ashes, and kingdoms in ruins. We have heard of tornadoes, which have carried

the ploughshare of destruction over the fairest portions of the earth. We have heard of volcanic irruptions rolling a tide of burning lava far and wide. We have heard of mighty earthquakes, which in one disastrous hour have swallowed up thousands and tens of thousands in one wide, yawning, terrific grave!—I have heard of many such things; but here is one, perhaps more ruinous to man and his best interests than all such put together. For, whereas other evils chiefly affect the body, this reaches the soul; and whereas other evils are confined to times and places, this sweeps over the whole world, as some sirocco of the desert, or some blast from the pit! Like Death upon the pale horse, it sends a thrill of horror wherever it goes. It curses men, and curses women. It curses the body, and curses the soul. It withers everything that is beautiful, and blasts everything that is good. Poverty and disease, and strife, and violence, and murder, are in its train; and death and hell wind up the fearful escort. Young men, let the temperance banner wave over you! Be its unflinching advocate—be its fast friend. Never traffic in ardent spirits; and rather die than "deal out death by the half-pint." O what a meeting will there be between the rumseller and his victim in the

resurrection morn! A Boston poet has been very graphic here:

"One was the drunkard, early dead,
The other, he who hurled him to the grave!
As the grave raised its rattling shroud, and
Let their bodies forth, clothed, both with dismal
Immortality—the drunkard started,
As he slowly turned, and fix his horrid eyes
On him who shrank from that look of death,
And sprang to seek his hiding tomb. Moaning
He said—'Spirit! why gaze on me? Who art
Thou? Knowest thou me?' 'Know thee?' loud shrieks
Replied: 'Know I this judgment morn? Know I
The threat to meet thee here again! Stand forth!
Thou doomed, unconcerned fiend! Aye, well I know
Thee! Well I knew on earth, thy damning arts
That lured me to the grave! Stand forth! and look
On yonder flowery spot, where rose to heaven
My angel wife and babes, and read the
Inscription on their tombs, and mine! I am
The murdered man thou sawest die, and thou,
My murderer; the monster seller of that
Ardent fire that burned my body, and now
Burns my soul! But, hark! the judgment-trumpet
Calls! and we must meet the Judge! I told thee
So, when dying on my bed of straw, in
Yonder world. Away! Away! for still the
Trumpet calls! It calls for thee, thou murderer!
And I will be a witness at the bar,
And call on God to damn thy soul and mine!"

Young men, you must exert a great influence in your day and generation, for good or

evil. Remember, there are two great interests set up on earth, and they are antagonistical. O, see to it, that the full weight of your influence be on the right side. Be bold in your opposition to everything that is evil, and demoralizing; be valiant for the truth; "serve the God of your fathers with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind." Tell me not that zeal in the cause of virtue, of religion, and of God, will interfere with your other engagements or lawful callings in life. By no means will it. You may have the plough, or the pen, or even the sword, in your hand, and God in your heart at the same time. In every calling, in every profession, in every pursuit of life, you may find illustrations of the fact, that piety and the lawful pursuits of life, are by no means incompatible with each other. Do you wish to be a lawyer? Be it so. Seldon was a lawyer, and Seldon was a very pious man. Do you covet the office of a judge? Very well. Sir Matthew Hale was a judge, and Sir Matthew Hale was a most devoted Christian. Do you desire to be a physician? Be it so. Bœrhaave was a physician, and no one questions his piety. Would you be a merchant? Divie Bethune was a merchant, and so was Robert Ralston, and who knows not that their praise is in all the churches? But you must be a mechanic.

Be it so; that is an honourable calling; Harlan Page was a mechanic, and Harlan Page had many, converted by his instrumentality, to rise up and call him blessed. And should you even wish to be a soldier—be it so. At the call of your country, buckle on your armour. Go forth and meet the invading foe. Yes, at the call of your country, be a soldier. Cornelius was a soldier, and so was our own beloved Washington. The apostle says, "Not slothful in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord." The idea is this, that *duties never clash*. You can be a zealous, warm-hearted Christian, and at the same time be active and enterprising in all the lawful callings and pursuits of life. Indeed he who professes to be a Christian, and neglects his temporal duties, dishonours the name of Christ, hence the language of the apostle, "He that provides not for his own, and especially for those of his own household, hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel;" and the rule laid down, which embraces all duties, whether of a temporal or spiritual nature, is this: "Whatsoever thy hands find to do, do it with thy might, for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave to which thou goest." Yes, in relation to everything which claims your attention, be active and diligent, remembering the words of our blessed Re-

deemer, "The night cometh when no man can work." But, as we have said, out text embraces,

II. Considerations, which are worthy of the attention of all, but particularly of young men. The first is expressed in these words: "The Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." The idea is this, that the eye of God is upon you; that he knows, not only all your actions, but all your thoughts. He is with you at all times, by night and by day, at home and abroad, and is perfectly acquainted with your whole character; you are ever in his immediate presence, and have to say, with Hagar in the wilderness, "Thou, God, seest me!" What a powerful consideration this is to hold the sinner in check, and make him anxious, neither to do, or say, or think anything that is wrong. "Thou, God, seest me!" The bare thought of it, is enough to make the dagger to fall from the hand of the assassin. The bare thought of it, is enough to cause the cup to fall from the hand of the inebriate; and enough also, to cause the oath to die half uttered upon the tongue. O remember, young man, that you can hide nothing from your Maker, that every sin you commit is known and registered, and that the day of review must come! The second consideration is this: "If thou seek

him, he will be found of thee." O, if you only knew what is implied in finding God! if you only knew how rich and happy this would make you! Count up all the silver and the gold in this wide world; add every diamond and every pearl; add all the kingdoms on earth, and the glory of them, and what is all this to the favour of God? The favour of God!—it is everything which men on earth, or angels in heaven can desire; hence the language of the Psalmist: "Thy favour, O God, is life: thy loving kindness is better than life." This is the prize presented, and how is it to be obtained? By seeking. "If thou seek him he will be found of thee." If some one, in whom you have confidence, should tell yo that there is a jewel hid in the sand near your dwelling, which is worth one hundred thou sand dollars, and that if you seek it, you shall find it, and finding it, it shall be yours; would you not seek it? Aye, would you not immediately enter upon the work of seeking it? Would you not seek it by sun-light, and star-light? by moon-light, and torch-light? and would you not seek it with all your heart? with unwearied perseverance, and with a settled determination never to give over, but to seek until you should find it. Now, this is the promise made, this is the assurance given in relation to the one pearl of great price,

"If thou seek him, he will be found of thee." And now, if you wish to find the eternal God, as the rest and portion of your soul; if you wish to repose in his bosom, and share in his everlasting love, you must seek him as directed—"Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, and call upon him while he is near."

But, in this matter there are certain things which must not be forgotten:—1. You are to seek the Lord while you are yet in the morning of life. Few persons, comparatively speaking, are converted after they are thirty years of age. The season of youth, ah! that is the golden season, the best season; hence this special command given, "Remember, now, thy Creator, in the days of thy youth;" and, also, this special promise, which we find upon sacred record, "They that seek me early shall find me." 2. You are to seek the Lord, in the forsaking of all your sins, as it is written, "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon." Yes, this is a settled point; you are to give up all your sins, even your most loved and besetting sin. Though dear as a right hand, you must cut it off: though dear as a right eye, you must pluck it out. The sacrifice may be esteemed great, but it must

be made, for the Psalmist says: "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me;" and if you indulge in one single sin, even in your heart, why should he hear you? Remember, you cannot be earthly-minded and heavenly-minded at the same time. "You cannot serve God and Mammon." This leads me to make a third remark:—You must seek the Lord, earnestly; you must seek him with all your heart, even as the hungry man seeks bread, the thirsty man seeks water, or as the ambitious man seeks fame. Your whole soul must be in the matter. You must feel that everything that is dear is at stake—that, if you succeed, you are happy for ever; if you succeed not, you are undone to all eternity. O, then, let this be with you the great concern, to seek and find God, as your supreme good, and the portion of your soul. And for your encouragement, remember it is written, "Then shall ye seek me, and find me, when you search for me with all your heart." Take God at his word. Believe the promise, and your salvation is sure. Your sins will be pardoned; God will be your Father, and heaven your sweet and everlasting home!

But a third consideration, or motive, presented in our text is expressed in these emphatic words: "But if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." Here we have, as

it were, the mutterings of the thunders of the last day. The language is awful: how does it fall upon your ear? Listen! "But, if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever." My young friends, suppose your parents should cast you off; suppose your brothers and sisters should cast you off; suppose your friends and neighbours—suppose the whole world should cast you off, would you not esteem yourselves wretched? Let my father and my mother cast me off; let my brothers and my sisters cast me off; let my friends, and my neighbours—let all the world cast me off—but, O God of my salvation, do not thou cast me off! for, if driven from thy presence, whither, O whither shall I go? Permit me to remark, that when I was quite a youth, one of Watts' hymns made a very deep and lasting impression upon my mind, particularly these lines:

"That awful day will surely come,
The appointed hour makes haste,
When I must stand before my Judge,
And pass the solemn test.

Thou lovely Chief of all my joys,
Thou Sovereign of my heart,
How could I bear to hear thy voice,
Pronounce the word, DEPART?

The thunder of that dismal word
Would so torment my ear,
'Twould tear my soul asunder, Lord,
With most tormenting fear.

What! to be banished from my Life,
And yet forbid to die?
To linger in eternal pain,
And death for ever fly?"

These lines came over my soul with a most awakening influence—with a most tremendous power; but the following verse crowned the whole:

"O! wretched state of deep despair,
To see my God remove,
And fix my doleful station, where
I must not taste his love!"

The scenes of the last great day were brought vividly before the eyes of my mind. There was the Judge enthroned—there the vast multitude of the human family assembled—the righteous on the right hand, the wicked on the left; and a great gulf between. Amongst the happy ones, I pictured to myself many of my dearest relatives, and above all, my sainted mother! The Judge smiles upon them, but there was no smile for me. I must depart! Cut off from God, and his angels, and all whom I loved on earth, I must take an everlasting farewell. Driven away, I must wander down the vale of an unblest eternity—a wretched, hopeless exile from God, and happiness, and heaven. O, ye dear youth, who have been blessed with pious parents, and who have been early taught the great truths of our

holy religion, how could you bear to see your "God remove"? How can you endure the thought of having your doleful station fixed where you "must not taste his love"? Never, no, never, never more! O eternity! eternity! To be exiled from God, and happiness, and heaven, for a million of years—how overwhelming the thought! But, O, for ever! "Who can paraphrase" (as a poor dying sinner said,) "who can paraphrase upon the words, for ever and for ever?" My young friends, remember, great eternity is before you, and what you do this night may stamp your character, and fix your destiny for ever! You may try to hide these things from your eyes, you may try to forget them altogether; but this will avail nothing. God has appointed a day wherein he will judge the world; yea, even the secrets of all hearts. Amid the scenes of youth, and the pursuits and pleasures of this life, you may perhaps enjoy yourselves, and get along without God and religion; but what will you do when the evil days shall come, and the years draw nigh, when you shall say, I have no pleasure in them. In the morning of life, when everything is smiling around you, it is quite possible that you may have something like joy playing around your heart; but what will you do in the day when the sun, or the light, or the moon be not darkened, nor

the clouds return after the rain? You may get along without God, it may be, when you are yet young, and everything is smiling upon you; but what will you do when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders shall cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened? You may get along without God, it may be, when you are yet young, and everything is smiling around you; but what will you do in the day when you shall be afraid of that which is high; and fears shall be in the way, and the almond-tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail, because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets? You may get along without God, and religion, perchance, while you are yet young, and everything is smiling around you; but what will you do in the day when the silver cord shall be loosed, and the golden bowl shall be broken; in the day when the pitcher shall be broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern; in the day when the dust shall return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it? Young men, listen to me: this world has a powerful charm for many, and especially for the young; the influence which it exerts over multitudes is

truly astonishing; and after all, what is the world, but a "land of unsubstantial shades"? and what are the things of the world but "an empty, though brilliant show"? So teaches Solomon—"Vanity of vanities," says he, "all is vanity." Observe, this is not the language of a poverty-stricken man, who, under the influence of envious feelings, cries down those things which he possesses not. Nor is it the longing of a carping cynic, who, soured by disappointment, would retire from the world in disgust. No, nor is it the language of a man who utters in a moment of excitement that which he would fain recall in the season of calm reflection. It is the language of a man famed for his riches, and wisdom, and prosperity. It is the language of Solomon, the son of David, and king of Israel. No man probably, that ever lived, was better qualified to form a correct estimate of the world and the things of the world; for, it seems, there was no source of worldly enjoyment to which he had not repaired in his pursuit after happiness, and here he gives the result of his long continued observation, the verdict of his own dear bought experience—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Notice, Solomon does not affirm, that some earthly things are vain, but all—"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Not that Solomon intended to say, that literally there is nothing

good or desirable on earth. His idea is this: as the supreme good, or portion of the soul, everything of an earthly nature is weighed and found wanting. This falls in with the language of the poet:

> "The world can never give,
> The bliss for which we sigh."

And, if I mistake not, this falls in also with the experience of the gayest of the gay, now present. Ah! believe me, "There is nothing true, there is nothing firm, there is nothing sweet but heaven!" O, my young friends, in view of all these things, be persuaded to seek something better than this world can give. The world! how vain will it appear when you are sinking in the cold embrace of death! The world! what a poor thing, what a beggarly portion, when it shall be wrapped in the winding-sheet of the last great conflagration: and oh! how utterly unworthy of the aspirations of an immortal mind, must all its riches and honours, and splendours this moment appear to those bright spirits who are now high in the climes of bliss, and bathing in glory, as in the sunlight of heaven! Therefore, young men, listen, oh listen, I again entreat you, to the language of the text; it was the dying charge of a father to a son whom he loved; and it may in substance be the charge given to some

of you, by some beloved parent, now gone to glory! O hear it, as the counsel of experience and love! O receive it, as the voice of an oracle, or angel of God:—"My son, know thou the God of thy father, and serve him with a perfect heart, and with a willing mind, for the Lord searcheth all hearts, and understandest all the imaginations of the thoughts. If thou seek him, he will be found of thee, but, if thou forsake him, he will cast thee off for ever."

SERMON XII.

THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD.

And I heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude; and as the voice of many waters; and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth."—Rev. xix. 6.

That there is a God, all nature cries aloud, through all her works; and, the religious rites and ceremonies which prevail on earth, plainly declare the general belief, that this great Being has not retired from the scene of his creating power, but still, as a sovereign God, presides over the worlds and the creatures which he has made. Of the true nature and character of this government, however, little can be

gathered from the light of reason, and the researches of the learned. To obtain clear and correct information upon this point, we must have recourse to the sacred volume, and, such are the views which it presents of the Divine government, that, in the contemplation of them, we shall find abundant matter for the loud and harmonious shout in the heavenly world:—"Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" According to the Scriptures, the government of God is *unique*, for, whereas the right of earthly monarchs to reign is founded, sometimes in conquest, sometimes in the elective franchise, and sometimes in hereditary claim; the government of God is founded in none of these things, but, in principles infinitely more sublime. It is founded,

I. In Creation.—He, who, on earth, has founded an empire, is thought to have a right to rule the empire, which he has founded. Now, God having created all things; having brought all things out of nothing into existence, has, in the sublimest sense of the term, founded the empire of the universe; and, therefore, has an undoubted right to reign over the empire which he has thus founded. Hence the language of the Psalmist, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof: the world, and they that dwell therein, for he has founded it upon the seas, and established

it upon the floods." And again: "O, come, let us worship, and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker. He made us, and not we ourselves; we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand."

II. In Preservation.—He, who originally created, still sustains all things. The whole universe rests upon his hand, and should this great Being, only for a moment, withdraw his upholding hand, the pillars of the universe would sink; the whole frame of nature would be dissolved; yea, all created existence would immediately vanish away, and leave nothing behind save the throne of God, and a boundless solitude! As all things, then, depend upon God, for their continued, as well as original existence, here of course is another firm foundation upon which the government of God is rightly based.

III. In the Perfections of God.—Certainly, it is right and proper that he should hold the reins of government who is best qualified to to rule: especially where such immense interests are at stake. And here we may ask, with the Psalmist: "Who, in the heavens, is like unto the Lord our God? and, who, in all the earth, can be compared unto Him?" Is *wisdom* requisite to manage the complicated affairs of this vast universe? God is infinite in wisdom. Is *goodness* necessary? God is su-

premely, unchangeably, and everlastingly good. Is *power* requisite? "The thunder of his power who can understand?" But, why speak we of single perfections? God, as one well remarks, is

> "A God all o'er consummate, absolute;
> Full orbed; in his whole round of rays complete."

No wonder, then, that the exile of Patmos, caught up in the visions of God, "heard, as it were, the voice of a great multitude; and as the voice of many waters; and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" The immediate occasion of this great shout in heaven seems to be the fall of mystical Babylon, or Papal Rome; but, no doubt, every new development of Divine Providence will renew the shout, through all the ages and cycles of great eternity! That we may better understand the subject; and also be better prepared to respond to the loud and rapturous shout in glory, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth," let us notice some of the distinguishing features, or characteristics of the government of God. And,

1. It is supreme and universal.—The Lord hath prepared his throne in the heavens, says the Psalmist, and his kingdom ruleth over all. There are many governments on earth; and,

doubtless, there are many thrones and principalities in the other worlds, but the throne of God is high over them all! Alexander the Great was called master of the world, but there were many regions of the earth over which his sceptre was never stretched, and there were many people of whom he had even never heard. And even within the limits of his acknowledged empire, how many kings disdained his control! Not to mention the lions of the forest, and the leviathans of the deep, could Alexander the Great rule the changing seasons? Could he command the lightning? or the rain? or the hail? or the storm? Alexander's kingdom was extensive, but not to be compared with the kingdom of the God of heaven. Alexander ruled over many kings, but God *over all!* Yes, God hath prepared his throne in the heavens, and, literally, his kingdom ruleth over all! over all men, over all worlds, over all creatures, in the broadest, sublimest sense, *over all!* But

2. The government of God is not only supreme and universal, it is particular.—It not only extends to great, but to small objects; not only to the mighty whole, but to every part! Yes, whilst his power and his wisdom are employed in upholding and directing the "hosts of suns, and stars, and adamantine spheres, wheeling unshaken amid the void immense,"

his wisdom and his goodness are engaged in directing and controling all things on earth, from the revolution of an empire to the falling of a sparrow! It is even so! He that garnishes the heavens also beautifies the earth. He that numbers the stars, and calls them all by their names, also numbers the dew-drops of the morning, and the sands upon the sea-shore! That hand which bears up the mighty seraph, sustains the meanest insect, and He who bids the roaring tempest sweep the earth, directs the breathing of the softest zephyr! Stagger not at this! for, "as one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day," so an atom is with God as a world, and a world as an atom! As immensity cannot confound him, so minuteness cannot escape him! The fact is, with God there is nothing great! With God there is nothing small! Some persons admit the general government of God, but deny his particular providence. The idea is absurd; for what, if I should say of a physician, he has a general practice, but no particular patient! or, of a scholar, he is a man of very general reading, but he never reads any one book! But what says the Saviour on this subject? It is striking, it is conclusive. "Are not two sparrows sold for one farthing, and not one of them shall fall without your Father? Fear

not, the very hairs of your head are all numbered!" How small is the sparrow in the lone wilderness! and how insignificant is the single hair which has fallen from your head! And yet, according to the Saviour, even such things are not overlooked in the providence of God! And what is taught as true, in the word of God, is shown to be necessarily true also by reason—for we find that in the world of nature, providence, and of grace; in all the departments of the Divine government, we find that great matters and little matters are oftentimes linked together; and who does not know that in a chain stretched across a river, the breaking of a small link may prove as serious a matter as the breaking of a great link! How many striking illustrations of this fact have we in history, in observation, and experience! The cackling of geese once saved the city of Rome from the power of the Gauls. Joseph's coat of many colours was one link in a chain of most surprising events! A single playful remark of Francis the First, occasioned a bloody war between France and England. The carving of a few letters in the bark of a tree led to noble invention of printing! And, to the apparently accidental falling of an apple, we are indebted for some of Sir Isaac Newton's sublimest demonstrations in natural science; and who, of us, need to be reminded

of the tremendous consequences of our first parents' eating of the fruit of the forbidden tree?

> "——— her rash hand in evil hour
> Forth reaching to the fruit, she plucked, she eat!
> Earth felt the wound; and Nature from her seat,
> Sighing through all her works, gave signs of woe,
> That all was lost!"

And cannot every one of us, recollect some little remark, or incident, which has led to most important changes in our lives and circumstances? In the case of Joseph—his coat of many colours, his dreams, the envy of his brethren, his being sold into Egypt, his being falsely accused, his being cast into prison, the king's prison, his interpreting the dreams of the chief baker and butler, and also the dreams of Pharaoh and Joseph's interpretation of them, and the advancement of Joseph to be governor over all the land of Egypt, and finally, the settlement of Jacob and all his family in the land of Goshen—here are many things, some small, some great, linked together. Each event seemed to be casual, each actor free; and had the narrative been given by one of that age, he would very naturally have said: "It happened so;" and "it happened so"—and yet, if one of these things which "happened" had not happened, then, perhaps, the grand result would not have taken place!

But this leads me to speak of another distinguishing feature, a characteristic of the Divine government.

3. The government of God extends, not only to all things, but to all events; not only to all creatures, but to all their actions.—I am aware that we are here launching into the deep; but the Bible is our chart. It is a good chart, and we need fear nothing.

Reader, I am a Calvinist, so called; not that I embrace all the dogmas of the great Genevan divine, but certainly those that are embraced in the standards of our Church; and the longer I live, and the more carefully I examine the subject, the more thoroughly convinced am I, that the system, usually termed Calvinistic, is firmly based upon the Bible, and will stand the "test of scrutiny, of talents, and of time." Nay, I will go further, and say that the system needs only to be correctly understood by all the true people of God, to be received and loved. I repeat it, I am a *Calvinist*, but I am no *fatalist!* I hold to the sovereignty of God, and also to the free-agency of man, and whilst I believe that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will, yet it is in such a way as "thereby neither is God the author of sin; nor is violence done to the freedom of the creature; nor is the liberty or contingency of second causes taken away, but rather estab-

lished." It may not be possible for me to discriminate between the human and the divine agency; nor can I tell where one colour in the rainbow terminates, and where another begins; yet do I know that these colours are different, and both in the rainbow. I may not be able to reconcile the free-agency of man with the fixed purposes of God which I believe; nor can I reconcile the free-agency of man with the foreknowledge of God, which all must believe; suffice it to know that both doctrines are taught in the Bible, and I know that the Bible is true. Do I trample upon reason? I deny it—I have a syllogism. It is this: My heavenly Father says that these doctrines are all true. My heavenly Father never tells lies, and therefore these doctrines are all true! But can they ever be reconciled or explained? I believe they both can, and will be, when God gives the key. Suppose, for a moment, that you were utterly unacquainted with your twofold existence, as consisting of soul and body. Now, whilst believing yourself to be a simple, and not a compound being, suppose I should say: "You are a mortal man, and must soon die;" and the next moment should pronounce you an immortal being, and affirm that you can never die, but must live for ever! Would you not say, that I spoke very absurdly, and used very contradictory language?

But, should I add, wait a little, and you will have the key, and then all will be plain, and you will see that all is true, and there is no absurdity; no contradiction whatever; methinks you would reply, "No, sir, no key will answer, none can reconcile things so perfectly contradictory; 'mortal,' and yet at the same time 'immortal;' must die! and yet, will not, cannot die! The thing is absurd, it cannot be!" But when you are let into the secret of your twofold nature—O, now! there is no difficulty at all! Even so, in relation to the sovereignty of God, and the free-agency of man, we find it difficult to reconcile these things now, because the key is wanting. In a future state the key will be given, and then there will be no difficulty at all. In the mean time let us remember, that the Bible is suited to our probationary state. We need our faith tried, as well as any other grace, or virtue. And now our grand inquiry is, What does the Bible teach? for

> "This is the judge that ends the strife,
> Where wit and reason fail;
> My guide to everlasting life,
> Through all this gloomy vale."

That the government of God extends, not only to all things but to all events; not only to all creatures, but to all their actions. In other words, that the providence of God is, in some

way or other, concerned with all that is done or transpires on earth, is manifested from very many passages of Scripture. The strongest, I think, are those which assert the providence of God in cases where, least of all, it might have been expected.

Thus, in the 127th Psalm, we find it thus written: "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it. Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain." And again, "The lot is cast into the lap, but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord." But there is another passage of Scripture, perhaps, yet more remarkable; inasmuch as it asserts the providence and purpose of God in a case involving sin, dreadful sin! The passage referred to is found in Acts ii. 23: "Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain." The crucifixion of Christ, by envious and wicked Jews, was certainly a crime of great magnitude; and yet the apostle Peter tells us expressly that it was "according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God." The explanation of the matter is simply this: God knowing all things, foreknew what evil passions would be waked up in the bosom of the Jews by the life, and doctrines, and reproofs of our Saviour, and he also knew full well to what

a murderous deed those evil passions would lead, if not restrained. For wise and benevolent purposes towards our race, God determined, not to restrain those evil passions, but to leave the Jews (as of course he justly might) to the freedom of their own will—leave them to act out their own depravity; purposing, as I have said, to overrule the whole matter to the accomplishment of great ends. God was certainly under no obligation to exercise a restraining influence upon those wicked Jews; and if he foreknew what crime they unrestrained would commit, his "foreknowledge had no influence on their fault, which had proved no less certain unforeknown;" hence the apostle Peter, at the very time that he speaks of the crucifixion of Christ as being according to the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, nevertheless, charges home all the guilt thereof, upon the wicked Jews. Observe his language! "Him, being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucifixed and slain." The case of Joseph, also, is precisely in point. He was hated by his brethren, and by them sold into Egypt. This was a great sin; and afterwards, when in trouble, they freely confessed it. "And they said, one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the an-

guish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear, therefore is this distress upon us. And Reuben answered, saying: Spake I not unto you, saying, Do not sin against the child, and ye would not hear; therefore, behold also, his blood is required." Thus, all who had a hand in selling Joseph, acknowledged and felt that they had acted freely, and they writhed under the stings of an accusing conscience. Yet, when Joseph made himself known unto them, and they were greatly troubled at his presence, what said Joseph unto them? "I am Joseph, your brother, whom ye sold into Egypt. Now, therefore, be not grieved, nor angry with yourselves, that ye sold me hither; for God did send me before you to preserve life. Ye thought evil against me, but God meant it unto good, to save much people alive." There needs be no difficulty. The case is simply this. God, being infinitely wise, knows how, in perfect consistency with the perfections of his character, to make use of all instrumentalities, good and bad, for the accomplishment of his wise and benevolent purposes. Certain things God *brings to pass* by a positive agency. Other things he *simply permits* to come to pass. And, let it be remarked, permission and approbation do not, by any means, mean the same thing. Napoleon Bonaparte, when a

child, wished to go to a certain place, but was forbidden by his mother. Being headstrong, he persisted in going. "Well, my son," said his mother, "you may go, but remember! it is not with your mother's approbation." And thus God oftentimes permits things which, so far from commanding, he forbids, and highly disapproves. He permits sometimes, because he would not interfere with the free-agency of the creature. He permits, sometimes, because he purposes (as in the cases already mentioned) to overrule the evil intended for good; and sometimes he permits, in a judicial way, as a punishment for sins previously committed. Hence the language of Paul in reference to the heathen and their abominations: "Even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to do things which are not convenient." And now let it not be forgotten, this is all that is meant by a certain passage in our Shorter Catechism, which has been much cavilled at, viz: "The decrees of God are his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass." In other words, it may be stated thus:—By the decrees of God, we mean no formal legislative enactment, (as, "Thus it shall be," and "thus it shall not be,") but, simply the calm and settled purpose of an infi-

nitely wise and gracious God, to bring to pass, or permit to come to pass whatsoever does come to pass, for the glory of his name. Does any one ask, what is the difference between *bringing* to pass, and *permitting* to come to pass? I answer, God brought to pass the incarnation of his Son; he permitted to come to pass his crucifixion. The difference is as wide as the east is from the west. Our doctrine, then, is simply this:—By positive and permissive decrees, God, in wisdom and in love, manages the affairs of the universe, directs and controls all things, and all events, all creatures, and all their actions. It must be so, for, suppose an event to take place without the Divine permission; for example, then, it must be either because God is not aware of it, or cannot prevent it. If not aware of it, he cannot be omniscient; if he cannot prevent it, then he is not omnipotent; and then, of course, in the last case, "there must be a power behind the throne greater than the throne itself," which thought would be frightful! No, our doctrine is true, that the government of God extends not only to all things, but to all events, not only to all creatures, but to all their actions. In other words, that a Divine providence is concerned, in some way or other, "in all the good and ill that checker human life." Is further proof demanded? Permit me to quote a

very remarkable passage found in Isaiah xlv. 7: "I form the light, and I create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I, the Lord, do all these things." What! the Lord create *evil?* Yes! but in such a way as casts no stain upon his moral perfections; but, on the contrary, will furnish new matter for admiration and praise. Hence, the language of joy and gratulation which immediately follows:—"Drop down, ye heavens, from above! and let the skies pour down righteousness. Let the earth open, and let them bring forth salvation. Let righteousness spring up together; I, the Lord, have created it." But how does God create evil? As he does darkness. The first sentence explains the last. Observe the language: I form the light, and I create darkness. How does God form the light? By a positive influence, pouring radiance around. How does God create darkness? By withholding this radiance. Even so, by a positive influence, God makes peace, and by withholding that influence, creates evil, that is, permits it. In this, is God the author of sin? No more than the sun is the source of darkness, although its absence occasions that darkness. But this leads me to notice another distinguishing feature, or characteristic of the government of God.

4. It is absolute.—There is no doctrine

more plainly taught in the Scriptures than this. "Our God is in the heavens," says the Psalmist, "he hath done whatsoever he pleased." And again: "Whatsoever the Lord pleased, that did he, in heaven and in earth; in the seas and in all deep places." Paul confirming the doctrine, positively asserts that God worketh all things after the counsel of his own will. And Elihu, knowing that some would be disposed to contend against the doctrine, says: "Why dost thou strive against him? for he giveth not account of any of his matters." As God is indebted to none for his crown, He is amenable to none for his government. Being the Creator and Preserver of all things, he is in the sublimest sense of the term, the Proprietor of all things; and, therefore, has a right to do all his pleasure, in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth; and being infinitely perfect, it should be a matter of boundless joy and gratulation, that he is, and ever will be, the reigning God! He giveth not account of any of his matters, and why? Because the policy of his government, and his reasons of state cannot be comprehended by any finite mind. Sufficient for us to know, that He is infinitely wise and good, and does all things well. As a sovereign God he gives and withholds the fruits of the earth, and the rains of heaven. As a sove-

reign God he commands the hail and the tempest; the lightning and the storm; and, at his command, also, fierce diseases go and come. Yes, when it seems good in his sight,

> "—— He involves the heaven
> In tempest! quits his grasp upon the winds,
> And gives them all their fury, bids the plague
> Kindle a fiery boil upon the skin,
> And putrefy the breath of blooming youth!
> He calls for Famine, and the meagre fiend
> Blows mildew from between his shrivelled lips,
> And taints the golden ear!"

The Lord, says Hannah, in her song of thankfulness, "The Lord maketh poor, and maketh rich. He bringeth low, and lifteth up. He raiseth the poor up out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill to set them among princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory! for the pillars of the earth are the Lord's, and he hath set the world upon them." The idea is this. The Lord is the proprietor of all things, and therefore a sovereign God! Yes, my reader, as a sovereign God, he has not only fixed the bounds of the sea, but he has also fixed the bounds of our habitations; the bounds of our possessions, and the bounds of our lives. All things are under the full control of a wise and powerful God! If, then, some are rich and some are poor, some are honoured and some

despised; if some have great prosperity, and some have great affliction; if this child is an idiot, and that has good sense; if this child is born a cripple, and that in the full exercise of all its limbs, it is, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." And this reminds me of the case of a poor little mute in one of our Institutions for the deaf and dumb: "Child," said a visitor, (the conversation was in writing,) "child, can you tell me who made the world?" "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," replied the mute. "Very well, and can you tell me who Jesus Christ is?" "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God," was another beautiful answer of the mute. "All very good," said the gentleman, "and now, one question more. Can you tell me, child, how it comes to pass that you are deaf and dumb when others can both hear and speak?" "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight," replied the child with great meekness. Where did this child of affliction learn this lesson? At the feet of the blessed Jesus. You recollect the Saviour had sent out his disciples, two and two, to preach the gospel, and when they returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name," it is added, "In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank

thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and of earth, because thou hast hidden these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." Our Saviour, when on earth, often wept, but so far as I can recollect, only on this occasion, is he said to have rejoiced. And in what did he rejoice? In the sovereignty of God! "I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight." This is the more remarkable as it has reference to the sovereignty of God exercised in spiritual matters, in giving to some what was hidden from others. And we find the same spirit animating Paul, and in relation to the same matter. Hear his own words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy, and without blame before him in love, having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of him who

worketh all things after the counsel of his own will." The doctrine of God's sovereign and electing love is here plainly taught. And observe, it is not a *national* election that is spoken of, for Paul says, who hath chosen *us?* Not *us Gentiles*, for Paul was not a Gentile, nor *us Jews*, for the Ephesians were not Jews. If we were addressing a company of Africans, we would not say, *us Africans.* We are not Africans, nor could we say, *us Americans*, for they are not Americans. No national election can then be here intended, nor the election of characters, for those said to be chosen in Christ were not said to be chosen in Christ, because they were holy, but that they should be holy. And this reminds me of a passage in the Acts. Luke says: "And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed." If the election of characters and not persons be intended, Luke made a slip of the pen, and should have said, As many as *believed* were *ordained* unto eternal life. But no! this is the way it is written, "And as many as were ordained unto eternal life believed." But, as Paul, in the passage quoted, has no reference to a national, nor election of characters, neither does he here offer reference to the apostleship of any thing of the kind, for the persons to whom the epistle was addressed, were simply "the saints at Ephe-

sus," and "the faithful in Christ Jesus;" besides, it is expressly stated that they were chosen, not to the apostleship, nor any thing of the kind, but to the adoption of children. Some object to the doctrine of election. Is it the *word?* It is in the Bible, in numerous places, and cannot be expunged. Is it the *principle?* You elect your governors, your presidents, your generals, your judges, your sheriffs, your pastors, your partners in love and trade. No principle more common amongst men; we should not marvel, therefore, if it be common with God. Do men set a value upon the exercise of the principle? Go to the ballot-box, and tell that free-born American that he shall not exercise the elective franchise! He will surrender his life, before he surrenders that right! If, then, man sets a value upon the *principle*, why may not his Maker? But, is the doctrine of personal election objected to? And what is this doctrine? I would define it thus:—It is God's plan of securing the salvation of some, of a great multitude which no man can number! Now, why should we object to a plan for securing the salvation of a great multitude of the human family, which no man can number, when, without it, the salvation of all would be in jeopardy?

And here I am reminded of the remark of a certain very pious old lady. When asked

whether she believed in the doctrine of election, "Certainly," replied she, "for it is in the Bible." "What!" said the inquirer, "do you believe that you were elected before you were born?" "Yes," said she promptly, "I have been such a poor vile sinner, if God had not elected me before I was born, he never would afterwards." This remark, if I mistake not, must be understood and appreciated by all who know any thing of their own hearts, and have felt the power of God's victorious grace. And here permit me to remark, that the doctrine of election was designed for the consolation of God's children; and I would appeal to the feelings of every real Christian. Is it not more delightful to think that God set his love upon us from all eternity, than that he began to love us the other day? And what is so cheering to the child of God, need not be discouraging to the unconverted, for they have the same encouragement to seek salvation now, that the Christian had before he was converted. And the fact is, the grand inquiry is, not whether we can understand every part of the scheme of redemption, but whether there is such a scheme whereby the sinner may be saved. Not whether two or three doctrines in the Bible are hard to be understood, but whether the Bible itself, which contains these doctrines, be the word of God. Not whether

we are of the elect or reprobate, but whether we are sinners and need the salvation of Christ; for it is very remarkable, the same Bible which tells us that "whom God foreknew, them he also predestinated," also says, "whosoever will, let him take of the water of life freely:" And again: "It is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." Thus there are two classes of Scripture passages, and we believe them both. And as I have said before, so say I again, there is no more difficulty in reconciling the fore-ordination, than the foreknowledge of God with the free-agency of man, so that Christians of different persuasions should be very kind and charitable towards each other, inasmuch as (so far as regards the matter of difficulty) they are all in the same condemnation; and one thing is certain, if the system called "Calvinistic" be not scriptural, it looks very much like it. To prove this matter let us try it in this way. Suppose that the apostle Paul should enter the sacred desk, disguised as a preacher, and looking over the congregation, should break out in these words: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, according as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world,

that we should be holy and without blame before him in love; having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will." Would you not suspect that this stranger was a Calvinistic preacher? And suppose, waxing a little warmer, he should go on and say: "Moreover, whom he predestinated, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified. Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea, rather that is risen again, who also maketh intercession for us." Would you not think the preacher strongly Calvinistic? And suppose, waxing still warmer, and rising with the grandeur of the theme, he should add: "The Lord hath made all things to himself, even the wicked for the day of evil: therefore, hath he mercy on whom he will have mercy; and whom he will he hardeneth. Thou wilt, then, say unto me, Wherefore doth he yet find fault? for who hath resisted his will? Nay, but O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed, say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump, to make one vessel unto honour, and another

unto dishonour?" Suppose, I say, the apostle Paul, disguised as a preacher, should utter these "hard sayings," would you not pronounce him a Calvinistic preacher of the "straitest sect?" Ah! my reader, the case is clear. According to the Scriptures, God is a sovereign God, and doth his pleasure in the armies of heaven, and amongst the inhabitants of the earth, and there is none that can stay his hand, or say unto him, What dost thou? As an absolute sovereign, he rules over all the worlds of nature, and of grace; and if one person is prospered, and another afflicted; if one is born in a gospel, and another in a pagan land; if one lives to an old age, and another is cut down in youth, or early childhood; and if one is converted and made the trophy of victorious grace, and another is permitted to go on in sin, and perish in sin, it is "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

"Nor Gabriel asks the reason why,
Nor God the reason gives!"

But, 5. The last distinguishing feature, or characteristic of the Divine government, is this: It is wise and good—infinitely wise and good! If a being clothed with such tremendous power; O! if a being invested with such absolute dominion over all things, were capricious or malignant; if he took pleasure in in-

flicting pain, or delighted in the death of any of his creatures, how frightful would be the condition of the universe! But joy, joy to creation; this great Being, this sovereign God, is no less wise than he is powerful; no less good than he is great! It is true, that there are mysteries in the Divine government; and not unfrequently the paths of the Almighty are in the deep waters, and his ways past finding out. It is because God works upon a large pattern. His schemes embrace all time, and all eternity. Of course, we can see only a part, and how can we judge of the whole? Some cavil and object, because sin and sorrow have been permitted to enter our world; but who can tell, whether by the wise and over-ruling providence of God, these may not be made use of as the shading of some great moral picture? One thing we know, a dark ground is best for gilding, and precious stones set in ebony, shine with more brilliancy! There are, moreover, providences in relation to nations, families, and individuals, which, to such short-sighted creatures as we are, appear very mysterious, but in the winding up, we shall, no doubt, all have to say, He has done all things well. You recollect the case of Jacob. In a dark hour he said, "Joseph is not, and Simeon is not, and ye will take Benjamin away also. All these things are against me,

and ye will bring down my gray hairs with sorrow to the grave." But mark the winding up! Joseph is taken away, it is true, but it is only for a season; and, lo! Joseph's wagons are come! Joseph is made governor over all the land of Egypt; he has provided corn for the patriarch and all his household; and, lo! Joseph's wagons are come to take them all down into Egypt, to nourish them, and keep them well provided for in a time of famine! And see, too, those silvery locks of his which the patriarch, in a dark hour, said, should go down with sorrow to the grave. Only see how they fall upon the neck of his beloved son, Joseph!

> "Shall little haughty ignorance pronounce
> His works unwise? the smallest part of which
> Exceeds the narrow vision of her mind?
> As if upon a full proportioned dome,
> With swelling columns heaved, the pride of art,
> A critic fly, whose feeble ray scarce spreads,
> An inch around, with blind presumption bold,
> Should dare to tax the structure of the whole!"

"A thing," says Eliphaz, "was secretly brought unto me, and mine ear received a little thereof. In thoughts, from the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man, fear came upon me, and trembling, which made all my bones to shake. Then a spirit passed before my face; the hair of my flesh stood up: it stood still, but I could not dis-

cern the form thereof: an image was before mine eyes. There was silence, and I heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more just than God? Shall a man be more pure than his Maker? Behold, he put no trust in his servants, and he charged his angels with folly." Child of the dust, enter into thy nothingness! Creature of yesterday, put thine hands to thy mouth, and listen to the loud and harmonious shout of the heavenly world: "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!" Now, my reader, "we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face. Now, we know in part, but then shall we know, even as also we are known." O, when all darkness shall be removed, and the plans of heaven shall be fully developed, we shall then see that every thing permitted and done on earth, was permitted and done in wisdom and in love. Here is a piece of embroidery. It is some great masterpiece of art. You look upon the wrong side. You see nothing beautiful or distinct! Turn the right side, and you exclaim, "O, what a beautiful piece of embroidery this is! The colours, how brilliant! The figures, how distinct!" Here is a celebrated painting stretched over the wall. It has many figures, and they are so arranged that, to the eye that takes in the whole design of the artist, it appears most admirable; but there is a curtain hanging over

a part of it, and you are perplexed. Remove the curtain; then comes admiration, and you laud the artist, and pronounce the painting the most beautiful and perfect that you have ever seen. So it is with all the plans and providential dispensations of Heaven. When the curtain is removed, then will they appear in beauty and glory far transcending all our conceptions now. "What I do," says the Saviour, "thou knowest not now, but thou shalt know hereafter." "Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth!"

Christians! here is matter of joy for you! O how delightful to think, that it is your God and heavenly Father who fills the throne, and sways the sceptre, and rules over all! And joy upon joy! He will never abdicate the government, but will reign for ever! In what rapid succession do the kings of the earth succeed each other; but our King is one, and there is no other. The alone monarch of the universe. None before him! none after him! Through all the ages of time, through all the cycles of eternity, One and alone! "The Lord shall reign for ever and ever," says the Psalmist, "even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord." He reigns over the world, and, although wickedness abounds, and sorrows now prevail, yet the world is in good hands, and all its affairs are under the

control of a wise and powerful God. Aye, and the time is coming, when great voices shall be heard in heaven, saying, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ!" Moreover, Christian, your God reigns over the Church. Aye, and "Zion enjoys her Monarch's love." God is in the midst of her. God will help her, and that right early. "Look upon Zion, the city of our solemnities. Thine eyes shall see Jerusalem a quiet habitation, a tabernacle that shall not be taken down. Not one of the stakes thereof shall ever be removed; neither shall any of the cords thereof be broken; but there the glorious Lord will be unto us a place of broad rivers and streams, wherein shall go no galley with oars, neither shall gallant ships pass thereby." But God not only reigns over the world and the Church. He reigns over all things. Then, believer, remember, He reigns over you and yours. All your interests are safely lodged in his hands. Has sorrow entered your dwelling? Has deep affliction come upon you? O remember! He who notices the falling sparrow, will not forget the children of his love! Fear not, in the sight of your heavenly Father you are of more value than many sparrows. All your trials are known to him; your sighs are heard; your tears are in his bottle; and the promise is, All things shall

work together for good to them that love God, Yes, thank God!

"There is a day of sunny rest,
For every dark and stormy night;
And grief may hide an evening guest,
But joy shall come at morning light!"

Alleluia! for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth! Amen. Alleluia!

SERMON XIII.

THE BLESSEDNESS OF BEING A CHRISTIAN.

Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is.—1 JOHN iii. 2.

BELIEVERS may be unknown to fame; by worldlings they may be despised; by witlings and infidels they may be held in contempt. It matters not; it is a blessed thing to be a Christian. It is better to be numbered amongst the disciples of Christ, than to be enrolled amongst the most distinguished heroes the world ever saw. In proof of this assertion, I need only adduce the words of our text: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know, that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

The *present* and *future* condition of believers, will be the theme of our meditations at this time.

I. The present condition of believers.—This is presented in these beautiful words: "Beloved, now are we the sons of God." In a certain sense, all mankind are the sons, or children of God, as he is the Author and Source of their being; but, believers are the sons of God, in a sense peculiar to themselves; and even they were not always such; for, according to the Scriptures, they themselves were once the children of wrath, even as others. But they have been made the children of God in two ways: by *regeneration* and *adoption.*

First: By regeneration. The great doctrine of regeneration is clearly taught, both in the Old and New Testaments, but it was made very prominent by our Saviour, in his conversation with Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night, and said, "Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher, come from God; for no man can do these miracles, that thou doest, except God be with him." Jesus knowing how superficial were his views in the matter of spiritual things, and replying rather to his thoughts, than to his words, said unto him, "Verily, verily I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." Nicodemus expressing his

astonishment at this declaration, Jesus answered and said unto him, "Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again: the wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. So is every one that is born of the Spirit." Thus the Saviour, whilst he admits that the doctrine may not be easily comprehended by man, does not explain it away, but re-affirms its truth. He teaches that it is of the operations of the Spirit, and may be known by its effects. We cannot see the wind; we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth; but we know that there is such a thing as wind; for we can feel it, and we can see the effects thereof. So in the matter of regeneration. But, what is regeneration? In what does it consist, and what are its proofs? It is a work of the Divine Spirit, infusing spiritual life in the soul; and, as it were, new-creating the whole moral man—giving the subject thereof new views, new feelings, new sorrows, and new joys, especially a new taste and relish for spiritual things; so that, of the man truly regenerated, it may be affirmed, he is a "new creature in Christ," old things are passed away, behold, all things are become new. But those who are Christians, are made the children of God, not only by regeneration, but by adoption. And what is adoption?

"Adoption is an act of God's free grace, whereby we are received into the number, and have a right to all the privileges of the sons of God." By regeneration we are made to possess the nature, by adoption, the inheritance of sons; so that, I repeat it, by regeneration and adoption, we are, in a peculiar and most blessed sense, constituted the sons, or children of God; and here, in speaking of the present condition of believers, it is proper for us briefly to notice some of their privileges, and the honours now conferred upon them. And,

First: They are owned as the children of God.—What a privilege and honour this is! When it was proposed to David, the vanquisher of Goliah, to become, by marriage, the son-in-law of King Saul, he seems to have been quite overwhelmed with a sense of the honour proposed to be done unto him, and said, "Seemeth it to you a light matter to be a king's son-in-law, seeing I am a poor man, and lightly esteemed?" Now, if David thought it such a great thing to become the son-in-law of an earthly monarch, what shall we say of the privilege and honour conferred upon us, poor sinners and worms of the dust, to be made the sons and daughters of the Monarch of all worlds, the great and glorious God! whom all the heavenly armies worship and adore. "Behold," says John, "what manner of love the

Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God."

Secondly: We are not only called the sons of God, or acknowledged as such, but we are treated as such.—Yes! As children we are taught of God; as it is written, "All thy children shall be taught of the Lord." And it is a remarkable fact, that Christians of every communion, of all classes, and of every age, give proof, that they all have been brought into the same school; have had the same teacher; and all have learned substantially the same lessons. And here I may mention, in few words, some of the most important lessons which they have all been taught. A first lesson is, the vanity of the world. Under Divine influences, they have been brought to have such a view and sense of the emptiness of all things here below, that they are led to desire and seek after "a better country, even an heavenly." A second lesson is, their sinfulness. They are brought to know and feel that they are sinners; yea, in the sight of God, great sinners. They are led to see that it is of the Lord's mercies that they have not been consumed; and the prayer of the publican has been made their prayer, "God be merciful to me a sinner!" A third lesson taught to all who are the children of God, is the depravity of their hearts—the corruption of their whole

moral nature. The Bible says: "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked;" and the Saviour says, "Out of the heart proceed evil thoughts," &c. This may seem strange to the unrenewed man; but, when fully brought under Divine influence, he finds that the Bible account of the matter is but too true; that the heart is indeed deceitful and wicked; a bad soil, where lies the germ and buddings of all manner of iniquity; a polluted fountain, whence bitter waters are ever flowing; and the prayer of the Psalmist is found a most appropriate and much needed prayer: "Create within me a clean heart, O God, and renew within me a right spirit." A fourth lesson taught by the Lord to all of his children, is their weakness and helplessness. Once they thought themselves strong; could repent just when they pleased; believe just when they pleased, and (to use a common phrase) "get religion" just when they pleased. And I must say, that even persons who are really under Divine influences, when first awakened, are usually of the same opinion still; hence, as soon as they are roused to a consideration of their lost condition without a Saviour, they immediately go about to work out their own salvation. They go from duty to duty; from ordinance to ordinance; from resolution to resolution: thus endeavouring to establish a righte-

ousness of their own. They are going to outstrip old professors; they are going to do wonderful things! But, after a while, they find that they do not get along as well as they expected. They make promises, and they break them; they purpose to do this, and they do it not; they want to repent, and they cannot repent; they want to believe, and they cannot believe; they want to love, and they cannot love; they want to feel, and their hearts are as hard as rock! They are astonished—think that their case is very peculiar; are tempted to believe that their day of grace is over. Ah! now they feel that their case is an evil one; that they are lost, and cannot help themselves; yea, that their strength is perfect weakness; and, with a humbled heart, are ready now to say,

> "A guilty, weak, and helpless worm,
> On thy kind arm I fall;
> Be thou my Strength, and Righteousness,
> My Jesus, and my All."

A fifth and last lesson which I shall mention is, the suitableness and preciousness of Christ to the poor trembling sinner.—It is wonderful what new views of Christ the sinner has, when brought under the teachings of the Divine Spirit. He that formerly was as a "root out of a dry ground," is now as the "rose of Sharon," yea, as the "chiefest among

ten thousand, and the one altogether lovely." The sinner sees that the blessed Redeemer is exactly suited to his case; that there is not a want in himself but there is a corresponding fulness in the Lord Jesus Christ; and now he would rather be saved by him, than in any other way, and his language is, "Here, Lord, I give myself away, 'tis all that I can do."

"Welcome, welcome, dear Redeemer,
Welcome to this heart of mine;
Lord, I make a full surrender;
Every power and thought be thine.
Thine entirely,
Through eternal ages thine."

These are some of the most important lessons taught by the Lord to all of his children. And thus, as parents teach their children, or cause them to be taught those things which are requisite and necessary, so God, our heavenly Father, instructs the children of his love. But again: As children, God corrects us. "Whom the Lord loveth," says Paul, "he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." And again: "If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons, for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not?" And again: "Furthermore, we have had fathers of our flesh which corrected us, and we gave them reverence; shall we not much rather be in subjection to the Father of

spirits and love? For they, verily for a few days, chastened us, after their own pleasure, but He, for our profit, that we might be partakers of his holiness." What a thought this is! If we are indeed, by regeneration and adoption, the children of God, then all of our afflictions come from the hand of our heavenly Father; they are nothing but the sterner voice of God's parental love, designed to do us good, to wean our affections from earth, and ripen us for heaven, our home, our sweet and everlasting home! Let us never forget this; and the thought of it will tend greatly to lighten our heaviest burdens, and sweeten the bitterest cup. This caused the Psalmist to say, "I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, because thou didst it." Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and as children God corrects us. What a blessed thing it is to be a Christian! But this is not all. As children, God permits us to come to him in every hour of trouble and need, and make known to him all our sorrows, and all our desires. See that little child! It is sick, or, perhaps, some person has hurt the child, or it has some wants to make known; how pleasing, what a comfort it is for this little one to have an earthly parent to whom it can go; one who will lend a listening ear to its complaints; and who, moreover, is able and willing to supply all its wants! Even so, God, our

Father in heaven, permits us, as children, to come to him. He has erected a throne of grace expressly for our accommodation; and what a glorious throne of grace it is! Its foundations are laid in blood, in blood divine! It is paved with love, and over it is thrown the beauteous rainbow, everything inviting us to come with boldness, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help us in time of need. What a privilege this is! Jacob found it such, when, fearing the wrath of Esau, he turned aside and offered up this prayer: "O God of my father Abraham, and God of my father Isaac, deliver me, I pray thee, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and smite me, and the mother, and the children." And, good king Hezekiah, also, found the same a very precious privilege, when the prophet having said unto him, "Set thine house in order, for thou shalt die, and not live," he "turned his face to the wall, and prayed, and wept sore." And, my brother, what would induce you to part with this privilege? When Herod killed John the Baptist, his disciples, we are told, took up his body and buried it, and went and told Jesus. And so, my Christian friends, whenever you have sorrows, you may go and spread them before Him, who cares for you, and who can both pity and relieve. I, there-

fore, repeat it—What a blessed thing it is to be a Christian! Permit me to say, I thank God that *I* ever was converted. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God," and as sons, or children, God permits us to come to him, and pour out before him all our sorrows and our wants. Blessed be God! But even this is not all. To crown the matter, as children, God has provided for us a rich inheritance. Parents, if they can, are careful to make some provision for the future wants of their children. Even so, God has laid up in store for his children something to meet their wants in a future state. He has laid up for them an inheritance; and O, how rich and great is that inheritance! It is "an inheritance, incoruptible, undefiled, and which shall never fade away." It will be enough to supply all their wants, and meet every desire through all the ages of eternity. But this leads me to notice,

II. The future condition of believers.—The apostle not only says, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God;" but he adds, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be, but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." There is much embraced in these words, "and it doth not yet appear what we shall be." It is as if the apostle had said: There is some-

thing great awaiting the believer behind the curtain, but how great we cannot tell! Something glorious, but how glorious we now do not know. This may remind us of what Paul says: "Eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor have entered into the heart of man what things God hath prepared for them that love him." When the Queen of Sheba came to Jerusalem, and had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built; and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants; and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; and his cup-bearers; and his ascent by which he went up unto the house of the Lord, we are told there was no more spirit in her, and she said to the king: "It was a true report that I heard in mine own land of thy acts, and of thy wisdom; howbeit, I believed not the words until I came, and mine eyes had seen it; and, behold, the half was not told me: thy wisdom and thy prosperity exceedeth the fame which I heard. Happy are thy men, happy are these thy servants, which stand continually before thee, and hear thy wisdom." So it will be with the child of God, when he reaches the heavenly world; when he shall have seen "the King in his beauty," and shall have gazed upon the angels bending around the throne, and the redeemed, in their robes, "washed, and made

white in the blood of the Lamb." When he shall have heard the sweet and rapturous songs of that heavenly world, and shall have tasted of its unutterable joys, methinks he will exclaim in admiration:—I heard of heaven when I was on earth; I heard of its glories and its bliss; but, O, the half was not told me! Heaven! sweet heaven! it exceedeth, it far, very far exceedeth all that I ever heard, that I ever dreamed of when on earth! "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be."

1. "It doth not yet appear what we shall be," in point of dignity. It is true, we are told that we shall be made "kings and priests unto God;" but we know not what is implied in being made "kings and priests unto God." Moreover, we are told that we shall be made equal unto the angels; but we never saw these angels. It is true, John says he saw an angel come down from heaven, and the earth was lightened with his glory. This, to be sure, is calculated to give us very exalted conceptions of these first-born sons of light; but we have never seen an angel with our own eyes, and, therefore, we know not what it is to be made equal unto the angels. We know not what we shall be in point of dignity, as we have said; but this I will venture to affirm, we have reason to believe that the humblest

believer on earth shall, in heaven, attain a point of dignity, and grandeur, and glory, to which the loftiest angels cannot attain. Is this extravagant? Let us hear what the Bible says: "To him that overcometh," says the Saviour, "will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with my Father in his throne." Now, I ask where, and when, was it ever proposed to the loftiest angels in heaven, to have the honour of sitting down with the great Redeemer upon his throne? Again; the Saviour, praying for his disciples, uses this language: "That they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee; that they may be one with us." We know not what this *oneness* with the Eternal Son and the Everlasting Father means; but, one thing we know, this honour is proposed to be done to men, not to angels. Again; the apostle, speaking of believers, says: "If children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Jesus Christ." Notice this language, "joint heirs with Jesus Christ!" We know not precisely what this means; but, we know that the honour intended is exceeding great, and no mention is made of angels being permitted to share in this high honour. Again; we find Paul, in his first epistle to the Corinthians, using this language: "Do ye not know that the saints

shall judge the world? Know ye not that we shall judge angels?" Where is it said, in all the sacred volume, that angels, however exalted, shall judge the world,—shall judge angels? No, no! This high honour is not for them; it is reserved for ransomed sinners, for those who, by faith, are united to Christ in their effectual calling. And here is the secret, or rather the explanation of the whole matter: The Eternal Son of the Eternal God, has taken human nature, in connection with the Divine, and thus has raised human nature to this high eminence of grandeur and glory.

Peter I. of Russia set his affections upon a plebeian girl. He married her, and thus raised her to his bosom and his throne. On some grand gala day, see this mighty monarch on his throne! The nobles are around him, and all the princes of the blood, paying homage to their sovereign. And now, where is that plebeian girl? Whilst the nobles, and all the chief officers of the realm, are standing around their monarch, there she is seen, robed and crowned, a bride, seated at her husband's side. Even so, in the resurrection morn, when the mighty host of angels, and archangels, shall stand around the throne of the great Redeemer, the redeemed shall be raised above them all, and as the bride, the Lamb's wife, shall be permitted to sit down at her husband's

side, even upon his throne! O what high rewards and immortal honours await the redeemed in that world which is to come! And why this? Because the work of redemption is greater than the work of creation. It is the master-piece of the great God, and all its memorials will be to the Lord emphatically for a crown of glory, and for a diadem of beauty. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be, but of this we are confident, that the humblest believer on earth, shall, when arrived at heaven, attain a point of dignity exceeding great; even above that of the loftiest angels in glory!

2. It doth not yet appear what we shall be in point of knowledge. The Bible authorizes us to believe, that in heaven there shall be a vast expansion of mind, a vigour of intellect, and a range of thought, of which we can now form no adequate conception. The Bible says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face; now, we know in part, but then, we shall know even as also we are known." This indeed proves that knowledge will be greatly increased in heaven, but, to what extent, at the present time we know not. Even on earth, we find that there can be a great expansion of mind, and an immense increase of knowledge, within the space of only a few years. See Sir Isaac Newton, when a

little child in his mother's lap, pointing to the stars, and looking upon them only as little spangles; and see the same person, some forty or fifty years after, then a man, a great philosopher, with spy-glass in hand, measuring the empire of the great God, and telling us that those twinkling lights in the firmament, once supposed to be no more than little spangles, are so many brilliant suns, mighty globes, each a million times larger than the world which we inhabit, and rolling with a speed far beyond that of the fleetest cannon-ball, or swiftest whirlwind. What an expansion of mind, what an increase of knowledge, within a few years on earth, and this, too, with such poor helps as we have in this world! What then must be the expansion of mind, and enlargement of knowledge in heaven, amid the long roll of mighty ages, and with such instructors as we shall there have! There is a very remarkable passage found in the thirteenth chapter of Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians. In the very chapter in which he says, "Now we see through a glass, darkly, but then, face to face; now I know in part, but then shall I know even as also I am known;" in that very chapter, we find these words, "Whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." This seems strange, but the

idea is this:—As the stars fade away at the rising of the sun, their feeble rays being swallowed up and lost in the effulgent splendours of the bright and burning sun, even so, the knowledge which we have on earth shall dwindle into insignificance, into nothing, when compared with the infinitely greater knowledge which we shall have in yonder world of dazzling light and glory! O heaven, sweet heaven! There we shall have all light, and no shadows; all day, and no night! Yes; this is the testimony of the angel, given to John in the Isle of Patmos—"And there shall be no night there." What new views we shall have of the grandeur of God, and the glories of his divine perfections! What new discoveries of the immensity of his empire, and the wisdom of his administration! And, with regard to the wonders of Redemption, what new, what delightful, what overwhelming views we shall have of them! Then we shall understand the full meaning of that heavenly song, sung by those who stand upon a sea of glass, mingled with fire: "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord, God, Almighty! just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints." Ah! my brethren, we know that our knowledge in heaven will be greatly increased; but we can now form no more idea of the exceeding greatness of our knowledge in heaven, than the prattling

child can have of the knowledge of the greatest and wisest man who ever lived on earth. One thing, however, we know, that one scene of brightness will yield to another scene of greater brightness; light will be cased in light, and glory casketed in glory! And as the eagle, in her upward flight, soars away, far away from earth, as if she would revel amongst the stars, and light upon the chariot of the sun, so the ransomed soul, on wings sublime, shall rise, and with archangels shall expatiate amid the bright splendours which for ever play around the eternal throne! "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not appear what we shall be," neither in point of dignity, nor knowledge, and, I may add—nor joy! According to Scripture, the joys of heaven are exceeding great, they are unspeakable. "In thy presence," says the psalmist, "there is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore." Think of God, what a glorious Being he is, and how sweet to share in his smiles, and for ever to bathe beneath the unclouded glories of his countenance! Think of our blessed Saviour, and the joy of seeing him as he is in glory, surrounded by saints and angels, who in notes of sweetest harmony are for ever hymning his praise! And, to crown this joy, our text says, "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

The vision of the Redeemer will not only be beatific, it will be transforming; and then shall be brought to pass what is written in the oracles of divine truth, "we all, with open face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord!" O! to bear the image of him whom we love, and all the angels love! to bear the image of him who is the brightness of his Father's glory, and the express image of his person! Who can conceive of the joy, the rapturous joy which this will inspire! If this were all, it might truly be said, we know not what we shall be in the matter of joy. Next comes the society of the blessed! O! to think of mingling with angels, pure angels, being made as angels ourselves! and then to have, as our companions in bliss, the whole company of the redeemed—the patriarchs, the prophets, the apostles, the martyrs! How delightful to see and converse with Abel, the first of the human family who ever entered the portals of heaven! And Enoch, the seventh from Adam, who was translated, that he should not see death, having before his translation this testimony, that he pleased God! How delightful also, to see and converse with Noah, who with his family was saved in the ark, when the waters of the deluge passed over the whole earth! And

there too, we will meet Abraham, the father of the faithful; and Isaac the child of promise; and Jacob, the venerable patriarch, who, dying, leaned upon the top of his staff, and spake so sweetly of Shiloh who was to come, saying, "I wait for thy salvation, O Lord!" And there is Moses the saint of God, by whom the Law was given in Sinai's awful mount; and Joshua the son of Nun, who had the honour of leading the tribes of Israel into the promised land. But the time would fail me to tell you of Samuel the prophet, and David the sweet singer of Israel; and Isaiah whose visions of the Messiah were so clear; and of John the Baptist, who was sent to prepare the way of the Lord. And there is Peter too, the ardent one; and John, who leaned upon his Master's bosom at the pascal feast; and Paul, who was so miraculously converted on his way to Damascus; and Stephen, whose face did shine as the face of an angel, and who had the honour of leading on the noble army of martyrs under the New Testament dispensation.

And will it not be joyous to meet in glory the unnumbered millions of every age, of whom we have never heard; and our own beloved friends and acquaintances, too, with whom, in the sanctuary, in the social prayer-meeting, and around the domestic altar, we mingled our prayers and songs of praise! And, what say you of the joy of meeting and greet-

ing that sainted mother, who led you in tender life to the throne of the heavenly grace, and who, dying, charged you to meet her in heaven! O the sweet joys of heaven, and the fulness thereof! But why enlarge? I might mention the sweet music, the loud and harmonious songs of the heavenly world, as a source of joy, and the boundless increase of knowledge: in short, I might mention as the sum of all, the absence of all evil and the possession of all good, and the stamp of immortality given to each and every source of joy! But, it is enough to say, with Paul, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor have entered into the heart of man, what things God hath prepared for those that love him. "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

"A hope so much divine,
  May trials well endure;
May purge our souls from sense and sin,
  As Christ the Lord is pure.
If, in my Father's love,
  I share a filial part,
Send down thy Spirit, like a dove,
  To rest upon my heart.
We would no longer lie
  Like slaves beneath the throne;
Our faith shall, Abba, Father, cry,
  And thou, the kindred own."

SERMON XIV.

THE DANGER OF PROCRASTINATION.

And he said, To-morrow.—Exodus viii. 10.

Commissioned by the God of heaven, Moses and Aaron went in unto Pharaoh and demanded the release of the children of Israel; threatening, in case of disobedience, that tremendous plagues should come upon the land. Pharaoh disobeyed; and, accordingly, these plagues came in rapid and awful succession. It was whilst one of these plagues was upon the land, (the plague of frogs,) that the monarch of Egypt sent for Moses and Aaron, and said, Entreat the Lord for me, that he would take away the frogs. And Moses said, "When shall I entreat for thee?" "And he said, To-morrow." Is not this strange? One would think that Pharaoh would have said—Moses, what a question this is! You see with your own eyes, what an evil case I am in. Do you suppose that I can be willing to remain in this case another day, or even another hour? Do you ask, when you shall pray for me? Why, of course, the sooner the better—this day, this hour, this moment.—But, no: he said, "To-morrow!" Is this strange? It certainly is. But I am strongly inclined to think, that

this incident was recorded to present, in a figure, a case very common, and which is really far more strange: I mean the case of the sinner, who puts off to some future period the great work of securing his soul's salvation. In speaking from the words of our text, I purpose to notice several points of resemblance between Pharaoh and the impenitent sinner. And, I must say, I do think that the points of resemblance are very exact.

I. Both are in an evil case.—Pharaoh was certainly in an evil case, for God was dealing with him, and the judgments of heaven were upon himself, and upon his land. The monarch of Egypt felt that he was in an evil case. He must have felt it, and that very sensibly, or, verily, he had never sent for Moses and Aaron, and entreated them to pray for him. What! a proud man, a haughty king, beg the people of God to pray for him! This is convincing proof that Pharaoh believed himself in an evil case. And, I ask, what is the case, or condition of the sinner? According to the representation of the Scriptures, he is in the open field of ruin. His pious friends have come to Him, who is declared to be a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest; but, alas! the impenitent sinner has no such hiding-place—he is still in the open field of ruin, and what, though he may not see

the lightnings flash, nor hear the thunders roll, the storm is coming; and when it comes, it will be far worse than that which smote man and beast in the land of Egypt. Exposed every hour to be caught up in the whirlwind of divine wrath, and to the peltings of a storm which shall have no end, surely the sinner is an evil case. O how evil!

Again: According to the Scriptures, the impenitent sinner is in the broad road which leads to death, whilst his pious friends are in the narrow path which leads to life. Observe, this is the representation of the Saviour himself—his language is very striking—listen to it: "Enter ye in at the straight gate; for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat. Because, straight is the gate, and narrow is the way, which leadeth unto life, and few there be that find it." The Saviour here, it will be seen, represents the whole human family as journeying to another and eternal world; but not all journeying in the same way, nor all likely to arrive at the same end. See the great mass in the broad way! The smaller number in the narrow path. And whither are the broad-road travellers going? To life? To heaven? Alas! no: but to destruction!—that is, to the realms of darkness and despair! O see the broad-road travellers—they are hurry-

ing on! Every moment drawing nearer and still nearer to the world of woe—the gulf of everlasting ruin! With solemnity, I call God to record upon my soul, that I would not be in that broad road one hour for a thousand worlds! Sinner! remember, you are in the broad road! And can you tell me, how far off is your journey's end? See, your mother, perchance, is in the other way, the narrow way, which leads to life. She beckons you to join her. She weeps: she prays for you! O be persuaded—leave the broad road—enter in at the straight gate. This is the injunction of the Saviour himself. If you remain where you are, I tell you the truth in Christ, I lie not, like Pharaoh, you are in an evil case.

Again: According to the Scriptures, the sinner is condemned already, and the wrath of God abideth upon him. Observe, it is not said that he is in danger of being condemned; but is condemned already. This is the very language of the Saviour, and how awfully does it set forth the condition of the sinner! Did you ever see a prisoner upon whom the sentence of death had been pronounced? Did you think him to be in an evil case? Well, he was. But the sinner is under sentence of death of a more awful kind, even the death of the soul. It is even so. The sentence which dooms him to everlasting death, has already

passed upon him; and if that sentence is not reversed, the pangs of the second death will assuredly seize upon him. But what adds a new ingredient of terror, is this, the wrath of God abideth upon him, hangs over him as the axe of the executioner, or thunderbolt of heaven, which may fall upon him at any moment. Suppose, walking at the foot of a lofty mountain, you should look up and see, hanging just over your head, a projected rock, quivering, and ready to fall upon you; would not this fill you with terror? but what is that quivering rock to the wrath of God? O that the sinner could but know his true condition! How unspeakably evil it is! methinks, the cry of the Philippian jailor would soon be his cry; "O sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Once more:

The sinner is on the left hand of his Judge; his pious friends are on the right: hear what the Saviour says, in relation to this matter. In portraying the scenes of the last great day, he utters this language, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, with all his holy angels with him; then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory, and before him shall be gathered all nations, and he shall separate them, one from another, as a shepherd divideth the sheep from the goats. He shall place the sheep upon his right hand, and the

goats upon the left. Then shall he say to those upon the right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. And then shall he say to those upon the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." O, fearful condition of those upon the left hand! Sinner, did you know it, you are upon the left hand this moment; and if the angel of death should now touch you, you are linked to the left hand, to await that fearful sentence—Depart! Is not this an evil case to be in? How can you consent to remain in it? How can you consent to die in it? But you are ready to say—O sir, I know that the unconverted sinner is in an evil case, and I know that I am one; but, I do not intend to remain in this condition, certainly I do not intend to die in it. I hope to be converted, I intend to be. This leads me to notice,

II. The second point of resemblance between Pharaoh and the impenitent sinner. Both indulge in a spirit of procrastination. Pharaoh said, "To-morrow," and so says every sinner. Yes, I think I may say every sinner. Certainly, every one who believes in the great truths of the Christian religion, and especially in the necessity of conversion. No man intends to be damned, although many in

their professions say that they will be damned, and will even swear to it! Can a man in his senses deliberately resolve to rush into a fiery furnace, or leap down a precipice; no more can any man deliberately make up his mind to go to the world of woe. Oh! no. He intends to go to heaven; and if conversion is necessary, he intends to be converted too. It is this hope of conversion at some future day that keeps him quiet. "If I had thought, twenty years ago," said a certain statesman, "that I would be called to die, without being prepared, I would have been a wretched man." This is just exactly the state of the case, with one, and may I not say, with all! The work of repentance is certainly to be done; but it is always at some future period—"To-morrow!" So it was with Felix, who under Paul's preaching, trembled, but said, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." Ah! so it is with thousands and tens of thousands, at the present day. This spirit of procrastination is deeply seated in the human bosom; and doubtless, there are many within these walls at this very moment, who are not yet converted, but who intend to be, before they die. They are now saying To-morrow, and they have been saying To-morrow, for lo! these many years. See this young man yet in his

sins; does he not know that he must repent, or perish? Yes, his mother taught him this a long time ago. Has he repented? He has not shed one penitential tear! Well, has he reconciled himself to the idea of perishing for ever? Certainly not. He intends to repent! When? to-day? No, it is not convenient now. There are some wordly pleasures which he wishes first to enjoy. But he fully intends to repent. When? And he says, "To-morrow!" See that young lady, who is one of the gayest of the gay, who will even trifle in the house of God; has she chosen Mary's part? She has the frankness and the candour to admit that she has not. Does she not know that she must have Mary's part, or she cannot have Mary's heaven? Certainly, she knows it. This is one of the lessons her mother taught her in the nursery. Well, is she willing never to have Mary's heaven? By no means; the bare idea of her never getting to heaven would spoil all her joys, would make her miserable! To be sure, she has not chosen Mary's part yet, but she intends to do it! When?—and she says, "To-morrow!" See that man of business, wholly immersed in the things of this world. He has great forecast with regard to the things of time, but none with regard to the things of eternity. He makes no preparation to meet his God. Is not

some preparation necessary? He admits it, and purposes to attend to this matter, all in good time. When? At some future period. And he says, "To-morrow." See, too, those who are openly wicked; who are intemperate, who are profane, who are fraudulent, who are licentious, who indulge themselves in every form of vice and iniquity. Do they not know that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God! Yes, they were taught this doctrine in the Sabbath-school, many years since, and they intend to reform. When?—and they say, "To-morrow?" And, O, sad to think upon, there goes a grey-headed sinner; the snows of fifty, sixty, seventy winters have been bleaching his locks, and his heart has never yet felt the sweet influence of a Saviour's love! Does he not know that he must set out for heaven, or, in the very nature of the case he cannot expect to reach that happy world? Certainly he knows it, for he has heard many a sermon, and has occasionally, and particularly in times of affliction, read his Bible. Has he set out for heaven? He has not taken one single solitary step! But he purposes to set out. When? "O, at some future period." And even this grey-headed sinner says, "To-morrow!" Persons in health too, I have seen putting off seeking the salvation of their souls, until they got sick; and when they were

laid upon a bed of disease, they were in too much pain to attend to the matter, and they put it off until they got well again; and some persons even under awakening influences, postpone the act of submission to Christ. They hope to be able to do something meritorious, and be better prepared to close in with the offers of salvation. When? And lo! even the awakened sinner too frequently says, "To-morrow!" O this spirit of procrastination! How common! It has proved the ruin of millions, and yet it is perhaps as common now as it ever was. Alas that it should be so! But there is another point of resemblance:

III. Both Pharaoh and the impenitent sinner have some reasons for saying "to-morrow," but the reasons are not good. The monarch of Egypt said to-morrow, hoping, perhaps, that his magicians might be able to remove the frogs, or that they might pass away themselves before the time fixed; and then, no thanks to Moses, or the God whom he served. No matter what his reasons were, we are quite sure they were not good. Even so, the sinner who puts off seeking the salvation of his soul, doubtless, has some reasons for doing so, but, assuredly his reasons are not good. Some tell us that they have not time to attend to such matters. The Saviour knew very well the varied engagements of human life. And yet his

command to every individual is this, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness;" that is, seek this as an object of the first importance, and in the first place; and that we should permit nothing whatever to have the priority over this, a remarkable case is left upon record. And one said to our Saviour, Master, I will follow thee whithersoever thou goest, but suffer me first to bid them farewell that are in my house. This indulgence was not granted. Another case, yet more remarkable, is this—Master, I will follow thee, said another, but "suffer me first to go and bury my father." Is there any duty more sacred than the performing of the funeral obsequies for a dead parent? Surely the Saviour will grant this request. No; he did not! "Let the dead bury their dead," said he, but go thou and preach the gospel; and as piety is a prerequisite to the work of the ministry, we see plainly that the Saviour meant to be taken literally when he said, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness." Let no one then say, that he has not time to seek the salvation of his soul. In no case can this reason be admitted as a good one. "But, it may be," another procrastinating sinner will say, "professors of religion are no better than others." In reply to this, we may remind you of the language of the apostle—"And what

hast thou to do to judge another man's servant?" But the words of the Saviour must silence every sinner for ever: "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." But the sinner may urge that he can do nothing. Let him lay his hand upon his heart, and say, if he can, that he has done everything that he could, but he must wait God's time! Is this it? Be it so; the present is God's time, as it is written, "Behold, now is the accepted time. Behold, now is the day of salvation." "To-day, if ye will hear his voice, harden not your heart." "But," again replies the sinner, "there are so many denominations." And is the sinner such a sectarian as to believe that we must belong to some certain church, or we cannot be saved? He believes no such thing; and therefore this excuse will not stand. Still wishing to justify himself, he may say, "I have time enough yet." "Friend," I would say, "how much time have you? Did you never hear of any one suddenly called away? And who knows, but you may furnish the next example?" But you say, your heart is so hard. And is there not a bath of blood divine which can melt the flint away? Thank God! there is balm in Gilead; there is a Physician there; aye, there is not a want in the sinner but there is a corresponding fulness in the blessed Redeemer; for it pleased the Father

that in him should all fulness dwell. But, it may be, the sinner says, he is not fit to come to Christ, yet his conscience tells him that he is a great sinner.

"Let not conscience make you linger,
Nor of fitness fondly dream;
All the fitness he requireth
Is to feel your need of him;
This he gives you,
'Tis the Spirit's rising beam."

The excuses which the sinner offers for procrastinating are many. Their name is "legion," but not one is good—not one will answer on a dying bed, nor amid the solemnities of the last great day! I repeat it, then; both Pharaoh and the impenitent sinner have reasons for saying "to-morrow;" but, in neither case, are the reasons good. This point of resemblance, then, is very exact; but there is yet another point of resemblance, and quite as exact as any yet mentioned. It is this:

IV. Notwithstanding all disguises, the true reason for saying to-morrow is perfectly manifest in each case. Pharaoh said to-morrow, because he did not choose to let the children of Israel go. He wished to retain his grasp upon them as long as possible, and as his release of the children of Israel must be simultaneous with the removal of the plague, he wished a little more time to think upon the subject. Pre-

cisely so it is with the sinner. He loves his sins, and he wishes to hold to them as long as he can; particularly certain sins, which are peculiarly dear to him, and to part with which would be almost like parting soul and body asunder. This one is wedded to gold; another loves the world with an inordinate affection; a third is not willing to give up the privilege of resenting injuries; and another has no taste or relish for certain acts of self-denial; whilst a fourth has contracted a certain evil habit, which he finds it almost impossible to break. See the profane man; the intemperate man; the licentious man; the fraudulent man; the revengeful man; and see, too, the crowd of ball-loving, theatre-going, horse-racing, Sabbath-breaking sinners. These all "roll their sins as a sweet morsel under their tongues." They would rather part with almost anything in the world than with their favourite indulgences. Indeed, I have known some like Esau, who, for one morsel of meat, sold his birth-right; and you know how, that afterwards, when he would have inherited the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no place for repentance, though he sought it, carefully, with tears. Yes, sinners are sometimes awakened under the preaching of the word, or, by some remarkable providence they are alarmed; their consciences smitten, they are ready to take up

the pentecostal cry, Men and brethren, what must we do? and, when told that they must break off their sins by repentance, and their iniquities by turning unto the Lord, they struggle, they hold back, they would like to compromise matters: and when told that they must give up every sin, crucify every lust, and must part with every idol, they think that the Bible exacts too much: and when we urge them to come to the point without any further delay, they are ready to say, and frequently do say, I do not like to be pressed in this way; I must have a little more time to think on the subject. Ah! my brethren, it is even so. The sinner loves sin; he wishes to indulge in it as long as he can; and, therefore, he says, "to-morrow!" Surely, all the points of resemblance between Pharaoh and the sinner are most exact; and, I would ask, is there not much reason to fear that the end of the one, and the end of the other will be substantially the same? Pharaoh was hardened; and is not the procrastinating sinner in danger of being hardened? "My Spirit," says God, "shall not always strive with man." And the apostle tells us of some who were given over to a hard heart, and a reprobate mind; aye, and I have myself seen some whose hearts seemed to be as rock, and as adamant!—yea, past feeling and past hope! O, fearful state of the sinner, when the Spi-

rit, grieved, departs to return no more! Can there be any condition on earth worse than this? Let me be poor; let me be a bondman; let me be a beggar; but, O my gracious God, let me not be a hardened sinner! O, cast me not away from thy presence, neither take thine Holy Spirit from me! But, another remark that I would make is this: Pharaoh was cut off in the midst of his sins, and so it may be with every procrastinating sinner in this assembly. How awful is the thought!

Let me close with a parable: There was in a certain place a faithful pastor, who was much blessed in his labours of love. He had, however, a neighbour, with whom he often conversed, and for whom he often prayed. This neighbour had some fine traits of character. He was a moral man, and seemed to be "not far from the kingdom of God." At times, he was much wrought upon, under preaching; and more than once he was ready to say to his pastor, "Almost thou persuadest me to be a Christian." Indeed, on one occasion, like Felix, he trembled, but like the same Felix, he by his actions said, "Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." Yes, with him it was always "To-morrow, to-morrow." One day the minister heard that his neighbour was sick, very sick. What if he dies in his pre-

sent state, thought the minister: he is an amiable man, a generous man; in many points of character a most excellent man, but, by his own confession, he is no Christian. Has he never felt the power of God's converting grace upon his soul—suppose he should die in his present condition! I must go and see him. Accordingly, taking his hat and cane, he called to see him. He knocked at the door; a servant opened it. "How is your master?" "Very sick, sir; please to walk in." The minister, led by the servant, entered the chamber. The curtains were down, and the room was darkened, and on the bed there lay his neighbour, scorched by a raging fever. Taking him kindly by the hand, "How do you find yourself this morning?" said the minister. "Very sick, sir," replied the neighbour. After a while the minister in a subdued tone of voice, said: "Do you think, my dear sir, that you have made your peace with God? Should God see proper now to take you away, are you ready to go?" "O Sir," said the sick man, interrupting him, "I am in agony! Please to excuse me. O my head! my head! I cannot talk to you now. Please to call again!" "When shall I call?"? "To-morrow," said the sick man. The faithful man of God burst into tears, and retired. The next day he called again. The knocker was

muffled; a bad sign. Knocking gently at the door, the servant opened it. "How is your master?" "No better, sir; please to walk in." The minister entered the chamber, and there was his neighbour, still upon a bed of sickness. "My dear neighbour," said the minister, "how are you this morning?" There was no response! The man was delirious now, and spoke in broken sentences, incoherently. The minister, leaning upon the top of his cane, looked at his neighbour, and the silent tear trickled down his cheek. He was about to rise up and go away, but the wife of the sick man exclaimed, "O my dear pastor, won't you pray for my husband!" The prayer was offered, and the minister, taking the hand of his neighbour, said, "my dear friend, good-bye." Still there was no response. Alas! the sick man knew not that his wife was weeping at his bed-side, and that his pastor had been praying for him. As the man of God was retiring, the affectionate wife followed him to the door, and in parting said, "My dear pastor, I am in great affliction, will you be so kind as to call again?" "Madam," said he, "when do you think I had better call?" And she said, "To-morrow!" O that to-morrow, that to-morrow! The associations were more than he could bear; and the man of God went weeping all the way returning to

his home. The next morning he called again; the knocker was still muffled. He tapped gently at the door. The servant opened. "How is your master?" "He is said to be worse, sir." "I would like to see him." "You can't sir! The doctor has just left, and he has given the strictest orders that nobody should enter the room but those who are waiting upon him. But here is my mistress."—"Madam! how is your husband?" "O! my dear pastor," replied she, bursting into tears, "he is worse—I fear much worse!" "I would like to see your husband, madam, a few moments." "I would be glad to have you see him too," replied the afflicted woman, "but our physician says, that the crisis is come, and that the slightest excitement may prove fatal; but the doctor said, that if his patient revived, he might be able to see you to-morrow!" Having received a message, about the going down of the sun, that his neighbour was still in a critical state, and too weak to be seen, the minister could hardly sleep that night, so anxious was he about the salvation of his neighbour. The next morning, taking his hat and cane, he went early, to make at least some inquiry. Tapping again, gently, at the door, the servant opened. "How is your master?" was the anxious inquiry. "O sir," replied the servant,

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"he is dead!" "Dead!" exclaimed the minister—"Dead!" "Yes sir, he died this morning, at 4 o'clock." "God have mercy"—the minister was about to say, but it flashed upon him, it is too late now! Dear procrastinating sinner! It is enough—I beseech you, do not say to-morrow any more! To-morrow! It may be too late for ever! To-morrow's sun may shine upon your grave! And O, remember that departed spirits return to earth no more! Once lost, you are lost for ever! "Be wise to-day, 'tis madness to defer."

Hasten, O sinner, to be wise,
  And stay not for to-morrow's sun;
The longer Wisdom you despise,
  The harder is she to be won.

O! hasten mercy to implore,
  And stay not for to-morrow's sun;
For fear thy season should be o'er
  Before this evening's course be run.

Hasten, O sinner, to return,
  And stay not for to-morrow's sun;
For fear thy lamp should fail to burn
  Before the needful work is done.

Hasten, O sinner, to be blest,
  And stay not for to-morrow's sun;
For fear the curse should thee arrest,
  Before the morrow is begun.

APPENDIX:

INTERESTING RECOLLECTIONS.

1. A Strange Thing.—"Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." Some years since, I held a protracted meeting in a certain town in Georgia. Amongst others who professed conversion, were some three or four men, who had been esteemed infidels. Upon the close of the meeting, I went to another town some thirty miles distant, and preached one sermon, at night. There was present, in a remote part of the house, a man of "three-score and ten," who was outrageously wicked, and an open and avowed infidel. He had around him several young men, whom he endeavoured to amuse, in order to divert their attention from what was said in preaching. Near him, however, was a stranger, a pious man, who was very much annoyed by his light and trifling remarks. When the services of the evening closed, this hoary-headed sinner, it seems, held, for the amusement of the young men, a kind of *mock prayer-meeting!* After which, he had the effrontery to come to the house where the pious stranger and myself lodged. In the family circle, the impious conduct of the gray-headed sinner had been the subject of our conversation; and the "stranger" was then requested to lead in the family devotions of the evening. He had taken his seat by a stand near the inner door, and was reading a portion of Scripture, when a knock was heard at the outer door. The gentleman of the house rose up, and opened the door; when who should come in but Mr. H., the old scorner! He was pointed to a seat near the door, and sat down. I was very desirous that the brother who was about to lead in prayer should know who had come in; for I suspected that there would be some reference to him in the prayer; but no; his feelings were too much wrought upon to notice anything of the kind. When the chapter was read, we all kneeled down; and in a little time our brother was praying, with great earnestness, for the young men who had been at preaching that evening. Now, thinks

I to myself, he will certainly notice the old man; what a pity he does not know that he is in the room. Well, sure enough, after pouring out his soul for the young men, the pious stranger added—"And now, O Lord, have mercy upon that *old creature*,"—and went on to state what that "old creature" had done and said in the church that evening. Upon rising from his knees, the brother who had prayed looked around, and saw the old man near at hand. He was astonished to be sure; but would not deign to make any apology. The old scorner took a hymn-book, and sitting down just opposite the person who had led in prayer, begged him to sing one of his "favourite hymns;" and then talked about the recent revival, and the conversion of the infidels there. "They were my disciples," said he; "Mr. Baker has taken them from me, and I think he ought to take the old shepherd now." I thought it time to come to the rescue of my friend; and, looking the old infidel full in the face, I said, "Sir, do you ever pray?" Suddenly he seemed struck, as by some invisible power! His eyes became glassy; his tongue was paralyzed; and, uttering some incoherent words, he rose up and hurried out. I never saw him any more. We were all much astonished, and came to the conclusion, that the hand of God was upon him, and that the sentence had gone forth against him, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther."

2. Another Strange Thing—but widely different.

A long time ago, I had as an inmate of my family, a nephew, about fourteen years of age. He was a member of my church, and was supposed to be truly pious. One night, in his usual health, he retired to rest. A little after, I heard a groan in his chamber. Seizing a candle, I rushed in, and saw my nephew throwing himself about in the bed very wildly. I spoke to him, but he gave me no answer. He seemed as one much terrified, and trembled exceedingly. "O that day!" said he, "that dreadful day!" "Why, my dear nephew," said I, "did you think that the judgment-day was come, and you not prepared?" "O yes, yes!" said he. "It was only a dream," replied I; "only a dream, but it is well to be prepared for that day." In a few moments he was composed, and seemed inclined to sleep. I retired, but had not left the room more than ten minutes when I heard another groan proceeding from the same quarter. Seizing a candle, a second time I hastened in, and again found my nephew in a state of great excitement. His eyes were open, but he seemed not to recognize me.

I spoke to him soothingly, but he replied not. Every muscle was in motion. I thought he was going into convulsions. Much alarmed, I sent for a physician. He came, and administered medicine, which appeared to have a tranquillizing influence. All who were present, (the doctor, myself, and two young ladies, named Martha and Mary, who at that time had made no profession of religion,) sat down, and watched him. His feelings now completely calmed, he closed his eyes; and, leaning his head upon my bosom, he seemed to be sinking into a gentle sleep. For a few minutes all was still, the silence of the grave reigned; when, all at once, my nephew in pleasing accents exclaimed, "Death cannot make our souls afraid!" Having said this, all was again "still as the foot of night," when my nephew raised up his head, opened his eyes, and sweetly smiling, exclaimed in thrilling accents, "O the glories of heaven! the glories of heaven! Delightful! Well—if I ever saw golden hinges before! Brother, I am glad to meet you here! (His brother had died about two months before.) There is Paul, and there is Peter! Well—let us go and see Stephen now! Well—if I ever drank such water before! There is God!" said he; and putting his hands before his face, he bowed down his head, and seemed to have the feelings of the adoring seraphim, who veiled their faces and their feet, and cried, in notes responsive to each other, "Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory!" He then took away his hands from his face; and, I must say, I never saw human face shine so! I never saw mortal eyes sparkle so! My nephew thought himself in heaven—within the precincts of eternal day—sounds seraphic falling upon his ear, and all the glories of the heavenly world on every hand! Looking around him, as one in perfect admiration, in perfect ecstasy, he exclaimed, "Here is everlasting rest! everlasting rest!" Having said this, he laid his head gently upon my bosom; and, in every feature of his countenance there was an expression of sweet satisfaction, which no words can describe. In a few moments, he raised up his head, and gazing around, as if looking upon objects which seemed to charm his inmost soul, he exclaimed, "There is no curse here! Uncle Daniel told me so!" (He had heard me preach from these words, "And there shall be no more curse.") "O the glories of redemption!" then burst from his enraptured lips. This scene lasted about thirty minutes, all present looking on, but saying nothing, when, all at once, my nephew's countenance was changed; a cloud came over his

face, his eyes lost their lustre, his features were distorted, and, as if seized with some sudden agony, he cried out, "O I can't go back! I can't go back!" and bursting into tears, he came to himself, and asked for water. I gave him. "Must I drink this water now?" said he; and then turning to the two young ladies, with a look and tone of voice not to be described, he said, "O, Martha, try to get to heaven! O Mary, do try to get to heaven!"—The next morning, he was in his usual health, and remembered his dream, or trance, or whatever it might be called, but manifested no disposition to speak about the matter.

I now simply state the case; I know not, to this day, what to think of it. No matter, whatever it may be called, and in whatever way accounted for, one thing I know, I would not have missed being present for a great deal. It gave me a vivid idea of heaven, and of the sweet surprise and rapture of the soul as it first enters that eternal world of glory. I know not, I say, what to make of it, or how to account for it, but it is so. At any rate, it served to bring up fresh to my recollection the words of Paul: "It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord. I knew a man in Christ, above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) such a one caught up to the third heaven. And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;) how that he was caught up into paradise, and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter." Thank God, there is a heaven! a paradise! a world of eternal glory, and eternal joy—there the wicked cease from troubling, and there the weary are at rest. No sin there! no sorrow there! but God is there! and the angels are there! and the redeemed, all robed in white, are there!—and there is joy, rapturous joy—yea, the full tide of overflowing and never-ending bliss! Visions of glory! how ye crowd upon my admiring sight! City of the living God! how happy are those who walk thy golden streets!

"Let heavenly love prepare my soul,
And call her to the skies;
Where years of long salvation roll,
And glory never dies!"

3. AN INCIDENT in a destitute place in Georgia.

Riding as a missionary, in a region of country where the sound of the "church going bell" was never heard, and no ordinances of the

church, were, perhaps, ever administered, I called at the gate of a log cabin to obtain some refreshment. As I dismounted from my horse, the lady of the house, a mother, ran out to meet me. "Oh! sir," said she, "ain't you a preacher?" On being told that I was—"I am so glad to see you," added she. "And why, Madam?" said I. "Why, sir," replied the good woman, "I have a dear child that has not been baptized; and I wish him to be consecrated to God in the ordinance of baptism." Upon conversing with her, and finding no difficulty in the way, I proceeded forthwith to the administration of the ordinance. Having explained its nature, and reminded the mother of her duty to do everything in her power to bring the child, even in early life, into the arms of that Saviour who said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God," I was about applying the element of water—"Madam," said I, "what is the name of your child?" "What is your name?" asked she. "Daniel Baker is my name," said I. "Well," rejoined she, "that is the name of my child." Heaven bless the good woman! It seems she had made a kind of a vow, that if the Lord would only send that way some minister of the gospel, to apply the seal of the covenant to her dear little boy, the child should bear the name of that minister, as a memorial of a mother's gratitude! Blessed ordinance! Precious privilege! If the sheep are in the fold, why should not the little lambs be there also?

4. Another Incident, in one of the waste places in Virginia.

Having sent an appointment to preach one sermon in a certain place, on a week day, I rode up at the hour appointed, and was astonished to see so many horses hitched all around. As no house near at hand could accommodate the persons assembled, we went into the grove, and had such accommodations as we could get. I preached a long sermon, and every individual seemed to listen with an eagerness which I had rarely ever witnessed before. On singing the last hymn, I rose, and gave them some parting words. I then pronounced the blessing, but was not permitted to go; and consented to preach another sermon, after a short recess. Accordingly, I did preach another sermon; and all who were present can bear witness that it was by no means a short one. After the last hymn was sung, perceiving that there was great solemnity, and that not an individual seemed to be inclined to retire, I resumed speaking, and having occupied some

twenty minutes, I pronounced the blessing, and sat down; and to my surprise, all followed my example, and took their seats! I waited for them to retire, but not one seemed at all inclined to go; they wanted me to give them some more last words. I accordingly arose, and addressed them again; and as my form was now fading upon their sight, and my voice now dying upon their ear, and we might never see each other's faces in the flesh any more, I charged them, in the presence of God, and his elect angels, to make the care of their souls the one thing needful, and to meet me in heaven! I sat down again, but still not an individual would move! Hearts were melting, and tears were in many eyes! They must still have "some more last words." I began again to speak, and had not continued long, when (my face being turned to the west) I saw a dark cloud rising. It began to lighten, it began to thunder, but none save myself seemed to know that the storm was near. At length, rain drops began to descend. "Friends," said I, "a storm is at hand; we had better retire." Then, and not until then, did they leave their seats in the grove: and one man, Captain Wright, coming to me, grasped my hand with much emotion, and, tears running down his cheeks, said, "Stranger, for God's sake come back, or send some one to preach to us the gospel!" Ah! little do those who have the means of grace in rich abundance, think of the condition of those who are far away, who have silent Sabbaths, and no heralds of salvation to preach to them the glorious gospel of the blessed God!

5. A DEATH-BED SCENE.—"The candle of the wicked shall be put out!"

Mr. R., a very profane and wicked man, lived two years in a certain town in which I resided, and during that period had heard me preach only two sermons. At a tavern on a certain Sabbath, he had a difficulty with a ferocious man, who drew a pistol and shot him down! Mortally wounded, he exclaimed, "Great God, I am a dead man! Send for Mr. Baker!" When I came, he grasped my hand, and exclaimed—"A dying sinner unprepared!" A few hours after, his sun of life went down behind a dark cloud! Sinners may think it a light matter to live without God, but of a truth, they will find it a serious affair to die without hope! They may revel in sin for a few days or years, at most.

But Oh! their end! their dreadful end,
Thy sanctuary taught me so;
On slippery rocks I see them stand,
And fiery billows roll below.

6. Another Death-bed Scene.—"Wo to them, when I depart from them, saith the Lord."

During a protracted meeting, in a very pleasant "Summer Retreat" in one of our Southern States, Mr. R——s, a young man, about twenty-five years of age, was brought under awakening influences. On the last day of the meeting I conversed with him, and found that there was a great conflict in his bosom. He felt the great importance of attending immediately to the high claims of God and eternity, but like Felix, it was with him—"Go thy way for this time, when I have a convenient season I will call for thee." The meeting closed, and Mr. R——s returned home unconverted. Two days after he was taken alarmingly ill, and on the eighth or ninth day he breathed his last. On the morning of the day on which he died, having great mental distress, he sent for a neighbouring minister before it was yet light. When the man of God reached his bed-side, he found him near his end, and sinking in despair! "I have no hope,' said he, "my day of grace is over, and I know when my day of grace closed—it closed with that meeting! O for forgiveness!" The minister told him that there was forgiveness in Christ. "No, no!" he passionately exclaimed, "but I don't feel it here, I don't feel it here!" laying his hand upon his bosom, already getting cold in death. The man of God referred him to many precious promises, but he could lay hold of none. "It is too late now! It is too late now!" In the midst of this affecting scene, the preacher was called into another room; a kind friend, then approached the bed of the dying man, and said "Mr. R——s, you had better compose yourself, and sleep a little now." "Sleep! Sleep!" said he in agony, "I have no time to sleep now! I must spend all my time in prayer now!" Just at this moment he seemed to be death-struck. His youthful wife, perceiving that her husband was just going, threw herself in agony upon his bosom, and shrieked aloud. This roused the dying man, for a moment, and looking up wildly, he exclaimed, "Lord Jesus!" and his heart ceased to beat.

"When a man dies, shall he live again?" "The night cometh when no man can work."

7. The Contrast—Another death-bed scene.—"The righteous hath hope in his death."

One of the jewels of my church in S—— was a lady who was remarkably timid, and retiring, in health. This universally beloved daughter of Zion was laid upon a bed of pain, of languishing, and of death. I called repeatedly to see her, and it was very pleasant to find, that in full view of her end, she had "a good hope through grace." One morning, in particular, (if I recollect right, her last on earth,) I approached her bed-side; and, taking her by the hand, said, "Well, my dear sister, how do you find yourself this morning?" Pressing my hand, she replied, "My dear pastor, I am in pain, I am in great pain; but O," continued she, "I am happy! I am happy! I am so happy! Jesus can make a dying bed feel soft as downy pillows are!" A little after, she remarked, "There are the angels of God! They are come for me!" That day her soul was with her Redeemer in paradise. O, what a blessed thing it is to be a Christian!

8. Another pleasing Death-bed Scene.

Mrs. C——, a lady of some distinction, was, I believe soundly converted in my church during a blessed revival of religion. For several years, she was a happy Christian; but, being obliged to move in a certain fashionable circle, the fervour of her religious feeling, in a measure, passed away, and a cloud came over her soul. With her evidences of divine acceptance darkened, she was taken sick. She was laid upon her dying bed. On one occasion, I said to her, "My dear sister, are you willing to die?" "No," replied she, "I have not those clear views of my Saviour which I used to have, and which I think I ought to have." This darkness continued for several days; but it pleased God again to visit her in mercy. Again was the blessed Saviour revealed in her heart, the hope of glory; and full of joy and triumph, she looked up, and exclaimed, "The long expected One is come at last! Blessed Jesus! I am willing to go now!" This light, as it is believed, continued until it was merged in the joys of the paradise of God!

Jesus, the vision of thy face
  Hath overpowering charms;
Scarce shall I feel Death's cold embrace,
  If Christ be in my arms!

And when ye hear my heart-strings break,
  How sweet my minutes roll;
A mortal paleness on my cheek,
  And glory in my soul!

Baker
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